Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

Evaluation Findings

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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the accomplishments, investments, and sustainability of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area (NFNHA). National Heritage Areas (NHAs) are places designated by Congress where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area was designated in 2008 by Public Law 110-229. Its mission is to preserve, protect, and promote the communities, landscapes, and cultural resources along a 13-mile corridor of the American side of the Niagara River in New York.

The NFNHA's authorizing legislation established a federal commission, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission (the Commission), to serve as the NHA's local coordinating entity for the first five years of its designation. In 2013 the Commission created the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc. (NFNHAI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, to serve as the heritage area's permanent local coordinating entity. The NFNHAI is responsible for meeting the purposes, goals, and objectives of the heritage area's authorizing legislation and approved management plan.

This evaluation, as dictated by the NFNHA's legislation and the National Heritage Area Evaluation Guide, is meant to address three fundamental questions:

1. Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area achieved its proposed accomplishments?
2. What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal and local government, and private entities in the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area?
3. How do the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's coordinating entity's management structure, partnership relationships, and current funding contribute to its sustainability?

The report is divided into five sections: Section 1 introduces the evaluation process, Section 2 provides an overview of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, and Sections 3-5 each answer one of the evaluation questions listed above. This report was prepared on behalf of the National Park Service by PennPraxis' Urban Heritage Project at the University of Pennsylvania's Stuart Weitzman School of Design.

Key Findings

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc. has proven itself to be an adaptable and resourceful organization, well positioned to continue to preserve, protect, and promote the region's heritage through future development, interpretation, and community building efforts. Led by a dedicated and passionate Executive Director, the NFNHAI has contributed enormously to a region beset by political fragmentation and decades-long disinvestment to establish itself as a vital community asset. Despite funding and capacity limitations, the NFNHAI has increased regional cooperation; strengthened heritage-related infrastructure; deepened and broadened the interpretation of the region's history; preserved and promoted the region's diverse cultural resources; and invested in the social and economic well-being of the community it serves.

Fundamental to the NFNHAI's success has been the formation of productive partnerships. Organizations like the National Park Service and Niagara University have helped nurture and grow the NFNHAI—providing guidance, organizational

Reenactor engaging with visitors at Old Fort Niagara. (Photo source: Kaitlyn Levesque)

support, and critical funding—which, in turn, has allowed the NFNHAI to create a substantial partnership network among heritage area communities. This network enables regional collaboration, linking local organizations not only to the heritage area, but to each other as well. The NFNHAI has also spearheaded the development of several high-profile heritage-related initiatives, including the Discover Niagara Shuttle (launched in 2016, it secured sustainable funding in 2019) and the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center (the first cultural attraction to open in the Niagara region in 37 years).

The NFNHAI has adeptly met the expectations of its authorizing legislation, having created a strong organization, leveraged more than $8.2 million dollars in non-federal funding, and achieved sustainable levels of support and activity in furtherance of its mission.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 National Heritage Areas

National Heritage Areas (NHAs) are places designated by Congress where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. As of 2021, Congress has designated 55 heritage areas; each is governed by separate authorizing legislation and operates under provisions unique to its resources and stated goals. While the National Park Service (NPS) provides technical, planning, and some financial assistance, NHAs are not national park units and the NPS does not assume ownership of land inside heritage areas or impose land use controls. Rather, an NHA is a community-driven approach to heritage conservation and economic development that focuses on local interests and needs. Through public-private partnerships, NHA coordinating entities support historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation, heritage tourism, and educational projects for these lived-in landscapes.

Each NHA is managed by its own coordinating entity—as dictated by their legislation these management groups may be state or municipal authorities, local non-profit organizations, institutions, universities, or federal commissions. The NPS provides the coordinating entities with advisory-type services and some level of annual financial support with Heritage Partnership Program Funds (between $150,000 and $710,000 per NHA). It is the coordinating entity's responsibility to develop and implement a management plan that will achieve the purposes specified in the heritage area's authorizing legislation. To assist with this, the coordinating entity usually creates an advisory or governing Board of Directors, made up of representatives from diverse segments of the local community. Members of the Boards may include, but are not limited to, elected officials, nonprofit practitioners, business representatives, librarians, historians, naturalists, landscape architects, educators, and civic organization leaders. Additionally, the coordinating entity is responsible for managing the NHA's federally allocated funds and obtaining the necessary non-federal matching funds to execute the NHA program within its designated area.

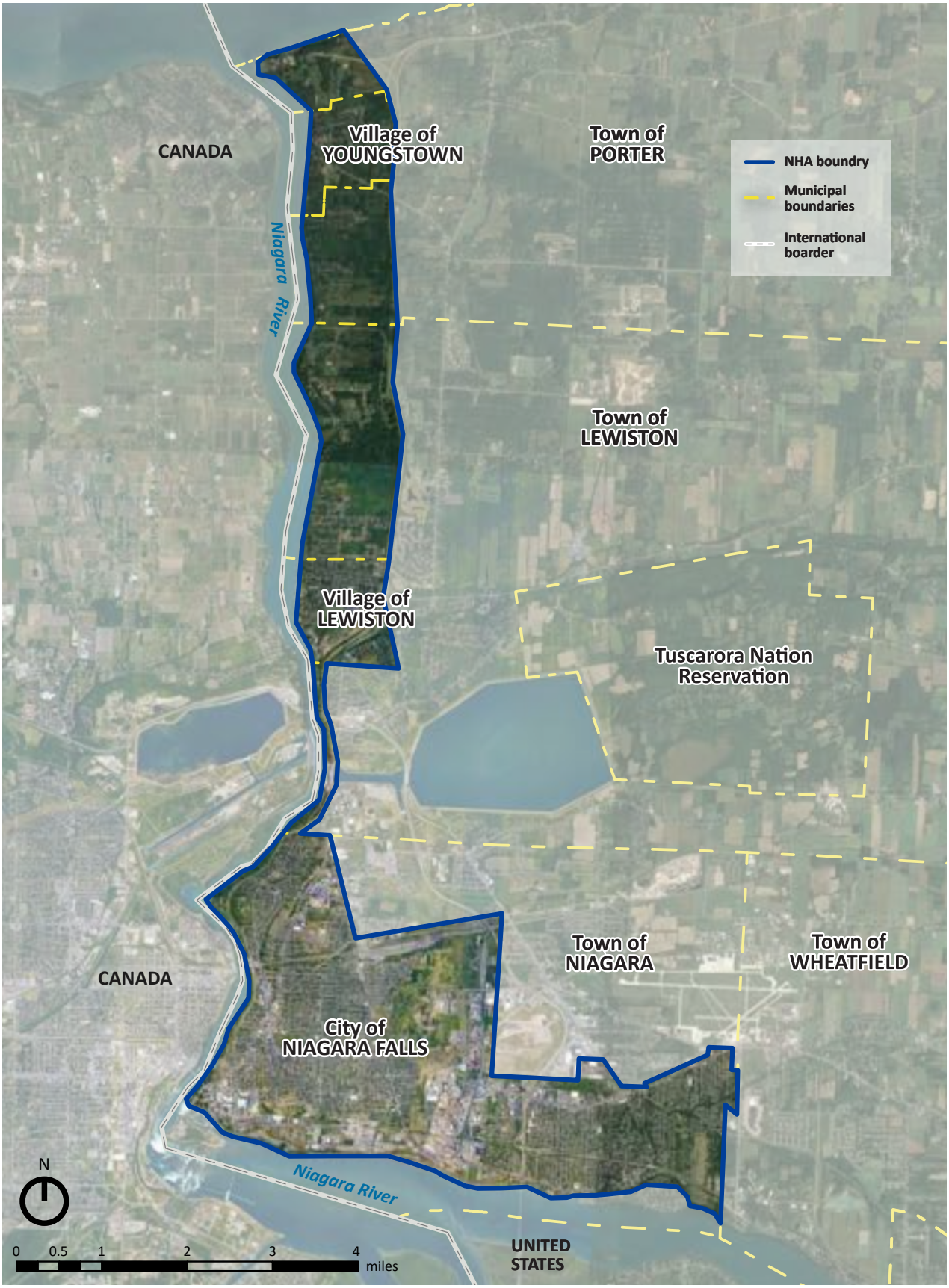
1.2 Purpose of Report

By law, NHA coordinating entities must undergo an evaluation of their accomplishments to establish whether they have succeeded in meeting the purposes and goals specified by their authorizing legislation and management plans. These evaluations occur three years prior to the sunset of federal funding, typically 10 – 15 years after designation, and are presented to Congress by the National Park Service. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area (NFNHA) was designated as an NHA in 2008 and faces its funding authority sunset in 2023. This report was prepared by Kaitlyn Levesque, Research Associate, and Randall Mason, Senior Fellow and Professor, of PennPraxis' Urban Heritage Project at the University of Pennsylvania's Stuart Weitzman School of Design (PennPraxis) on behalf of the NPS via cooperative agreement. The purpose of this report is to document the evaluation findings and assess the accomplishments of the NFNHA; the report process follows the National Heritage Area Evaluation Guide established by the National Park Service.

The evaluation is meant to address three fundamental questions:

1. Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area achieved its proposed accomplishments?
2. What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal and local

Figure 1.1: Map of NFNHA



Data sources: New York State Civil Boundaries, NPS National Heritage Area Boundaries, USA State Boundaries.

Table 1.1: NFNHA Overview

Designation	The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area was designated as a National Heritage Area in 2008 via Public Law 110-229.
Location	Niagara County, NY
Area of Encompassment	From the western boundary of the town of Wheatfield, New York, extending to the mouth of the Niagara River on Lake Ontario, including the city of Niagara Falls, New York, the villages of Youngstown and Lewiston, New York, land and water within the boundaries of the Heritage Area in Niagara County, New York, and any additional thematically related sites within Erie and Niagara Counties, New York.
National Historic Themes	Natural Phenomenon, the story of the Niagara region's landscape and natural history. Tourism and Recreation, the story that tourism played in the region's development. Power and Industry, the story of Niagara's pivotal role in the development of electricity as a power source and how it transformed twentieth century American life. Borderlands/Border Crossing, the story of the Niagara Frontier and the region's role as a contested borderland and boundary in which empires, nations, and peoples with conflicting perceptions and interests vied. Further broken down into: • The Western Door, the story of the Six Nations, or Haudenosaunee, in the vicinity of the Niagara River and what would become Western New York. • Clash of Empires, the story of Niagara as a key portal to the American interior, and native peoples as key regional players, in the world-wide clash of British and French empires during the mid-eighteenth century. • Revolutionary Frontier, the story of the region's experience as the British contact point with the Haudenosaunee homeland during the American Revolution. • War of 1812, the story of international conflict and violence between cross-border neighbors in the war between Britain and the United States, and that war's impact on the Haudenosaunee. • Underground Railroad, the story of escape to Upper Canada by African Americans fleeing slavery in the years before the Civil War.
Organizational Structure	Coordinating entity is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization overseen by a Board of Directors; Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Inc. consists of an Executive Director (only full-time employee) and two additional staff members who split their time with the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center.
National Park Partner	There is no local Park Unit partner. DOI Region 1 Office (NPS legacy Northeast Region, Philadelphia, PA) provides NPS support and assistance.
Other Partners	50+ partners including but not limited to: state, tribal, and local governments, school districts, universities, museums, historical sites, arts organizations, libraries, businesses, historical societies, travel and tourism groups, community health organizations, and other non-profit organizations.

government, and private entities in the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area?

3. How do the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's coordinating entity's management structure, partnership relationships, and current funding contribute to its sustainability?

1.3 Overview of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, located in New York, was designated by Congress in 2008 through Public Law 110-229 (See Appendix B for full legislation). Its mission is to preserve, protect, and promote the historic, natural, and cultural resources along a 13-mile corridor of the Niagara River—an internationally recognized biosphere and culturally significant landscape—stretching from Niagara Falls to Old Fort Niagara. The heritage area is situated at the western edge of Niagara County, along the United States' international border with Canada, and encompasses the city of Niagara Falls, New York, the villages of Lewiston and Youngstown, New York, and portions of the towns of Lewiston and Porter, New York (Figure 1.1). The coordinating entity for the NFNHA is Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc. (NFNHAI), a nonprofit organization managed by a Board of Directors. Representatives of both the Tuscarora Nation and the Seneca Nation of Indians have been involved with the NFNHA to a limited extent. The NFNHAI has maintained consistent contact with the Tribal Nations to include them in leadership and find ways to best serve them but acknowledge past and present tensions between indigenous communities and federal entities. While there is a friendly relationship with Canadian counterparts, the two sides of the river function separately (a reality that has been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic). It is a partnership that should continue to be addressed in new planning efforts for the NFNHA but is outside the scope of this evaluation.

The work of the NFNHA is to enhance public appreciation for the communities, significant historic and natural resources, and landscapes of the Niagara region. The NFNHA works with a network of heritage area partners who seek to make interpretive, environmental, economic, and social improvements that benefit residents and visitors alike. In pursuit of this mission, the NFNHA prioritizes authenticity, cultural diversity, high-quality design, energy efficiency, regional and cross border leadership, open communication, and transparent operations. See Table 1.1 for an overview of the NFNHA.

1.4 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation methodology employed in this project follows the National Heritage Area Evaluation Guide (the Guide) established by the National Park Service in 2012 and updated in 2016.

The Guide helps ensure a comparable process is used across various NHA evaluations. It is designed to assess the roles, processes, and structures that are common across National Heritage Areas, but also to be sensitive to each NHA's unique story and context. As such, the Guide outlines a three-phase evaluation process which includes tailoring the evaluation design to the specific NHA, collecting data and an internal review of results, and analyzing data and documenting results.

1.4.1 TAILORING THE EVALUATION TO THE NFNHA

To tailor the evaluation to the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, PennPraxis worked with NPS and NFNHAI staff to assemble and review foundational documents allowing PennPraxis to gain an understanding of the NFNHA, its background, organizational structure, and activities. These included but were not limited to:

- NFNHA Authorizing legislation
- NFNHA Management plans and past studies
- Annual reports from the coordinating entity
- Details regarding organizational structure for the NHNHA and its coordinating entity

An in-person, multi-day "meet and greet" is typically held during this phase of the evaluation, but due to COVID-19 health and safety restrictions the planning team was unable to travel to the NFNHA

for such meeting. Near the close of the evaluation process PennPraxis was able to arrange a limited in-person visit.

Communication was primarily conducted over video calls and emails. After reviewing the above documents and conducting several calls with key NPS and NFNHAI staff, PennPraxis developed a project-specific logic model, data collection plan, and interview protocols for the NFNHA.

1.4.2 DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected from documents and financial statements from a variety of sources, a meticulous review of said documents and financial statements, and virtual/limited in-person interviews with key staff and representatives from the NFNHA and partner organizations.

In addition to the foundational documents reviewed during the first phase of the evaluation, PennPraxis worked with NFNHAI staff to secure documentation supporting the following areas:

- Historical aspects and unique features of the NFNHA
- The NFNHA's mission and goals
- NPS funding and expenditures
- Sources and kinds of match funding
- Key program areas and activities
- Intended short- and long-term outcomes
- The NFNHA partner network
- Community response and relationship to the NFNHA

PennPraxis conducted Individual interviews with NFNHAI staff and board members to better understand the NHA's background and path to designation, the organizational structure of the coordinating entity (including its evolution from a federal commission to a nonprofit), the nature of the Niagara region and its heritage area partners, and their perspectives on key accomplishments and challenges for the NFNHA.

Additionally, PennPraxis spoke with the following partner organizations and individuals:

- Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative, Brian Archie (Co-Chair)
- New York Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Ang Berti (Marketing and Public Affairs Coordinator)
- New York Power Authority, Lou Paonessa (Senior Director of Community Affairs)
- Niagara Falls River Region Chamber of Commerce, Jennifer Pauly (Executive Director)
- Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center, Charles Walker (President and Chair)
- Oakwood Cemetery, Tim Baxter (Director of operations)
- Old Fort Niagara, Bob Emerson (Executive Director)
- Debbie Conway, Deputy Regional Director for the NPS Northeast Region (NPS coordinator for the NFNHA, 2008-2013)
- Tom DeSantis, City of Niagara Falls Director of Planning Environmental & Economic Development Department

Interviews with partner organizations provided perspective on the importance of the NFNHA, the impacts the heritage area has had within the Niagara region, the NFNHAI's role in creating and sustaining partnerships, and additional ways the heritage area could better serve community needs. Interviewees were selected in collaboration with NFNHAI staff and board members.

Due to COVID-19 health and safety restrictions PennPraxis was unable to conduct community intercept interviews, but as previously stated the evaluation team was eventually able to participate in a limited in-person site visit to the NFNHA to speak with key stakeholders and experience the heritage area firsthand.

1.4.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis focused on answering three fundamental questions:

1. Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the Niagara Falls

National Heritage Area achieved its proposed accomplishments?

2. What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal and local government, and private entities in the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area?
3. How do the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's coordinating entity's management structure, partnership relationships, and current funding contribute to its sustainability?

This involved assembling detailed descriptions and timelines for the various programs and activities supported by the NFNHA, conducting an extensive financial review examining trends in revenue and spending, processing the perspectives of stakeholders with nuance and objectivity, and ultimately synthesizing these findings in a way that answered the above questions with reference to multiple sources, quantitative and qualitative.

Following an overview of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area in Section 2, Sections 3, 4, and 5 of this report are each dedicated to the exploration and assessment of one of the fundamental evaluation questions. Section 3 describes the NFNHA's goals and objectives as required by the authorizing legislation and management plan and the relationship of these goals to program areas and activities. Section 4 provides an overview of the investments made in the NFNHA and an analysis of how the NFNHA has used the investments, and their impact. Section 5 presents an analysis of the interrelationship of the NFNHA's staffing and ability to obtain resources and achieve sustainability.

1.4.1 EVALUATION LIMITATIONS

PennPraxis has worked to ensure this evaluation methodology appropriately and thoroughly addresses the NFNHA's legislated evaluation requirements and the three research questions set forth in the National Heritage Area Evaluation Guide around which this report is structured. However, it is understood that every NHA has its own, unique set of parameters that can result in a few limitations or variances on evaluation findings.

COVID-19 health and safety protocols delayed the evaluation team's visit to the NFNHA and extended, though ultimately did not inhibit, the data collection and analysis phases of the evaluation. The ongoing pandemic also greatly impacted the work of the NFNHAI: many of their events and attractions in 2020 and 2021 were halted, funding and other revenue sources limited, and day-to-day operations disrupted.

The nature of the NFNHA's designation, its coordinating entity's transition from a federal commission to a nonprofit, and a change in the NPS liaison resulted in some gaps in financial/organizational information that are small in extent and did not prevent the evaluation team from building and interpreting a clear picture of the organization's performance.

1.5 Roles

There were three participating organizations directly involved in this evaluation effort—an external evaluator, the National Park Service, and Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

External Evaluator

PennPraxis' Urban Heritage Project, a heritage-based research group at the University of Pennsylvania's Stuart Weitzman School of Design, served as the external evaluator (Kaitlyn Levesque, Project Manager, and Randall Mason, Principal Investigator). PennPraxis developed the logic model and data collection protocols, guided collaboration between partners, collected and analyzed data, and prepared this report.

The National Park Service

The National Park Service staff (Kathleen Durcan, Peter Samuel, and Elizabeth Vehmeyer) provided the un¬derlying methodology, funding, and general project oversight for the evaluation. They also facilitated contact with the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and provided valuable resources and context for the history of both the NFNHA as well as the NHA program at large.

Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

The Executive Director of Niagara Falls National Heritage Area coordinating entity (Sara Capen) facilitated the evaluation by supplying the necessary documents and data, providing context and expert knowledge about the NFNHA, and identifying various individuals and partners for stakeholder interviews. Additional staff and members of the Board of Directors participated in interviews and provided feedback and insights during the data collection process. The NFNHA team had the opportunity to review this report for factual accuracy before it was finalized.

Section 2: Overview of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

This section of the report is an overview of the physical and operational aspects of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area (NFNHA). It first examines the history, geography, and demographic characteristics of the Niagara Falls region, to provide the necessary context for the purposes and goals of the NFNHA. It then discusses the development and evolution of the NFNHA itself, its current coordinating entity, the nonprofit Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc. (NFNHAI), and the heritage area's partnership network. The section concludes with a timeline of key events associated with the NFNHA.

2.1 Overview of the Niagara Region

2.1.1 HISTORY OF THE NIAGARA REGION

Located north of Buffalo in the western region of New York, the Niagara region is rich in beauty and stories. It is significant to the nation as both a natural wonder and the site of key events in American history. The narrative of the Falls speaks to Native American, Colonial, European, and African American experiences, as well as the ascendancy and legacy of hydroelectric power in the United States. Nature, parks, trails, museums, urban neighborhoods, towns, and power plants are the physical components of the region that help people experience and absorb this history.

The cultural history of the region begins with the indigenous people that have lived in the vicinity of the lower Niagara River since the retreat of glacial ice, rise of the Great Lakes, and growth of deciduous forests along the Niagara escarpment. The oldest well-documented archaeological sites in the region date to the Late Archaic Period (5,000 – 3,000 years BCE), and additional archaeological research provides evidence that the Niagara region was settled continuously from this time up to that of European contact, at which point the area was occupied by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, or the Iroquois Confederacy / Five Nations as they were called by European settlers. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy was originally composed of five tribes: the Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, and Seneca. In 1772 a sixth tribe, the Tuscarora, joined the confederacy after migrating back to their ancestral land from the south.

For many generations the Haudenosaunee Confederacy engaged in intertribal warfare with the western Algonquian League, led by the Hurons; this came to a head when the Mohawks led the Haudenosaunee Confederacy into a century-long series of raids and attacks on neighboring tribes commonly referred to as the Beaver Wars. During this period the Haudenosaunee succeeded in annihilating or assimilating entire tribes such as the Erie, Wenro, and the Neutral Nation; pushed back their ancient enemies, the Hurons, far to the north; and substantially expanded their own territory west to the Mississippi River and south into the Carolinas.

Euro-American cultural history in the region started with the exploration and settlement of northern North America by France and Great Britain in the late sixteenth century. During the eighteenth-century French and British forces fought over control of the area and its access to the Ohio River Valley, the Great Lakes, and the interior of the continent. Fort Niagara, originally erected by the French in 1726 or earlier, became an English stronghold following the French and Indian War. At the end of the American Revolution, the Treaty of Paris (1783) awarded the eastern side of the Niagara River to the United States, establishing the international boundary between the United States and Canada down the center of the Niagara River, although British forces continued to occupy the Fort Niagara until after the Jay Treaty (1794) and this

boundary would be bitterly contested but ultimately maintained during the War of 1812. Following the establishment of treaties with Native Americans tribes, American settlers began moving into the region.

The construction of the Erie Canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson River and New York City during the early nineteenth-century diminished the importance of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River as a transportation corridor and with it the Lower Niagara River and portage around the Falls. The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 and construction of the railroad to Niagara in 1838 allowed the Falls, largest waterfall in North America, to become much more accessible as a tourist destination.

The rise of tourism in the early nineteenth century brought hotels, museums, tours, boat rides, souvenirs, and outrageous stunts—tightrope walkers crossing the Gorge on wires and people in barrels going over the Falls. This uninhibited commercialism inspired a group of influential individuals led by Frederick Law Olmsted to lobby for preservation and restoration of Niagara Falls. After 15 years of effort, the Niagara Falls State Reservation was created in 1885, the nation's first state park. The process through which the state park was conserved and made available free of charge to visitors supported a national movement to use public money for the protection of land as public parks and helped inspire the creation of the National Park Service.

Prior to the American Civil War, the Underground Railroad routed large numbers of African American refugees to the Buffalo Niagara region because of its proximity to Canada, where slavery had been abolished in 1833. Individuals escaping enslavement in the mid-nineteenth century followed the "railroad"—designated routes and networks of people providing support for their efforts—to the Niagara River, the last barrier on their journey to Canada and freedom, where they would cross by bridge or boat. The village of Suspension Bridge, now within the City of Niagara Falls, was the site of John Roebling's 1855 bridge that proved the feasibility of suspension bridge technology for both railroad and vehicle traffic. His bridge became a major crossing point of the Underground Railroad in the years before the war.

In the late nineteenth century innovative entrepreneurs and industrialists began to harness the power of the Niagara River, constructing water-powered factories and mills throughout the area. In the 1880s, the emerging technology of hydroelectric generation heralded a transformation in American life. Niagara Falls was the scene of an intense and high-stakes competition in hydroelectric technology involving such names as Edison, Tesla, Westinghouse, and Kelvin. Entrepreneurs constructed the first large-scale hydroelectric power plants with the capability of generating large amounts of electricity. For the first time, electricity was produced in amounts large enough to power cities. Emerging electrothermic and electrochemical industries requiring amounts of power not before possible were drawn to Niagara Falls, which soon became an industrial center and the cutting-edge location for industries that transformed twentieth-century life.

Niagara Falls grew rapidly as an industrial, technological, and innovative center, but by the mid-twentieth century new realities of regional economic decline began to set in. Revolutionary developments in product creation by industry from the early 1900s through the 1940s led to intense environmental degradation with the potential for significant harm to human health. Beginning in the 1960s with changes in technology, widespread availability of electricity from other power sources, and the transfer of manufacturing to overseas locations, plants began to close down, jobs were lost, and the population began to decline as people moved elsewhere for work. In the 1970s the link between hazardous waste and public health became evident at Love Canal in the LaSalle neighborhood of Niagara Falls. After the Niagara Gazette published an expose' documenting an unusually high rate of birth defects and cancer deaths in a 36-block area around Love Canal, public outcry and federal investigations led to the awakening of a national environmental awareness and the development of governmental programs for brownfield remediation. The Niagara region has continued to experience a significant decline in

population, jobs, and civic resources over the last several decades.

In October of 2002, as a part of the response to regional decline of this nationally significant landscape, Public Law 107-256 the "Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Study Act," directed the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing a National Heritage Area. The resulting report, the Niagara National Heritage Area Study (2005), was used by New York Senator Charles Schumer, among others, to advocate for designation and served as the foundation for the NFNHA Management Plan (2012).[2]

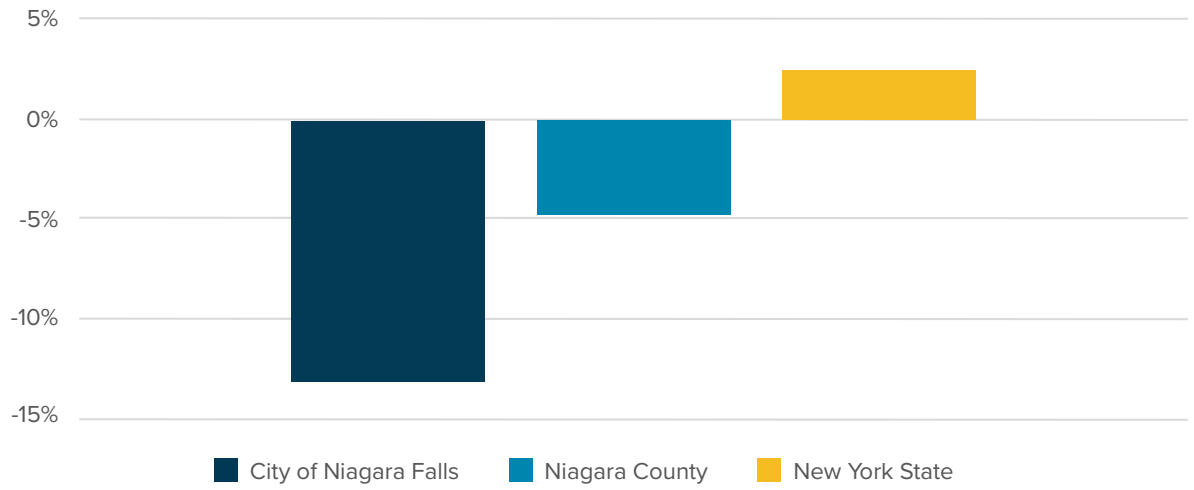
Horseshoe Falls, the largest of the three waterfalls that make up Niagara Falls. (Photo source: Kaitlyn Levesque)

2. Based on sections of the NFNHA Management Plan (2012) and the Niagara National Heritage Area Study (2005).

Table 2.1: Change in Population from 2000–2019

Year	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	New York State
2000	55,677	219,846	18,976,457
2010	50,891	216,546	19,392,283
2019	48,252	209,281	19,453,561
Change from 2000-2019	-7,425	-10,565	477,104

Figure 2.1: % Change in Population from 2000–2019



2.1.1 CURRENT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NIAGARA FALLS REGION

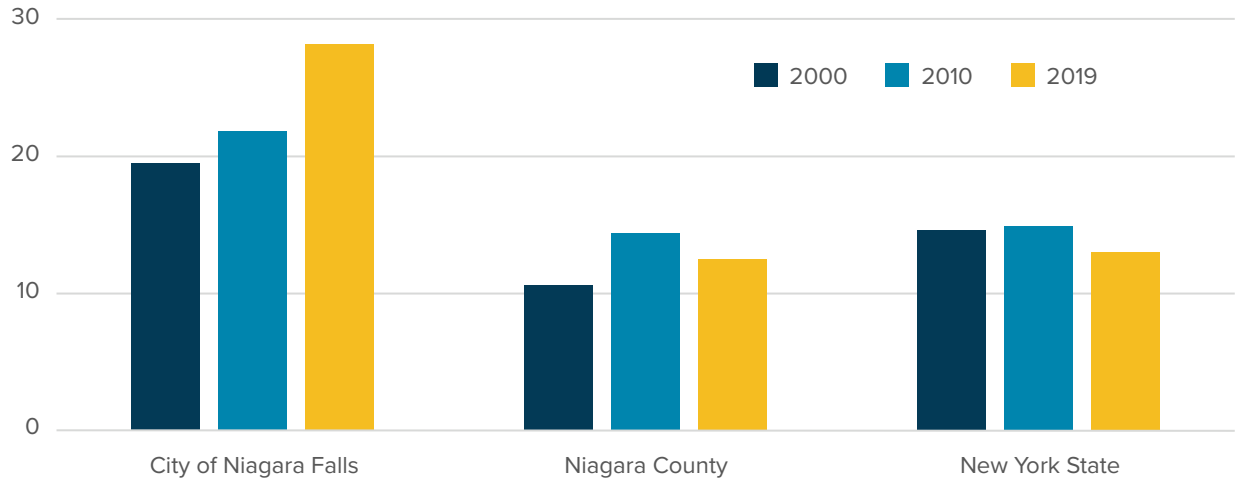
The City of Niagara Falls, the largest municipality within the NFNHA, is a classic example of a "legacy city," an older, industrial urban area that has experienced significant population and job loss throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, resulting in diminished resources, wide-spread vacancy, and lessened community pride. This decline in population and financial stability has continued into the twenty-first century. As shown in Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1, from 2000 to 2019 the population of the City of Niagara Falls declined by more than 13%; in contrast, Niagara County saw a much smaller decline (~5%), and New York State as a whole continued to grow its population. These trends are also echoed in poverty levels for the same time period. As shown in Table 2.2 and Figure 2.2 individuals living below the poverty level in the City of Niagara Falls increased by nearly 9% between 2000 and 2019. A stark contrast to Niagara County and New York State which saw a 1.9% increase and a 1.6% decrease in individuals below the poverty line respectfully.

Today, the City of Niagara Falls is embarking on renewed economic development strategies that build on traditional strengths (tourism) and draw directly on community assets while addressing community needs. The National Heritage Area, by protecting and illuminating the many natural, historical, and cultural assets of the community, is one of several critical initiatives in the region focused upon revitalizing the local economy and community through long-term investment and support.

Table 2.2: Change in % of Population (by individual) Below the Poverty Level from 2000–2019

Year	City of Niagara Falls	Niagara County	New York State
2000	19.5%	10.6%	14.6%
2010	21.8%	14.4%	14.9%
2019	28.2%	12.5%	13%
Change from 2000-2019	8.7%	1.9%	-1.6%

Figure 2.2: % of Population (by individual) Below the Poverty Level from 2000–2019



2.2 Introduction to the NFNHA Coordinating Entity

In 2008, the NFNHA's authorizing legislation (Public Law 110-229) designated a 17-member, federal commission, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission, to serve as the NHA's coordinating entity for the first five years of designation. During this period, the Commission oversaw the development of the NFNHA Management Plan (2012). In 2013, upon expiration of this five-year period, the Commission created and designated the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc. (NFNHAI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, as the new coordinating entity. NFNHAI is the NHA's current coordinating entity, it has been charged with carrying out the goals and missions of the NFNHA Management Plan.

2.2.1 AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION, MISSION, AND VISION

Public Law 110-229 (sec. 421) established the following purposes for the NFNHA:

- To recognize the national importance of the natural and cultural legacies of the area, as demonstrated in the National Park Service study report entitled "Niagara National Heritage Area Study," dated 2005.
- To preserve, support, conserve, and interpret the natural, scenic, cultural, and historic resources within the National Heritage Area.
- To promote heritage, cultural, and recreational tourism and to develop educational and cultural programs for visitors and the general public.

- To recognize and interpret important events and geographic locations representing key developments in American history and culture, including Native American, Colonial American, European American, and African American heritage.
- To enhance a cooperative management framework to assist State, local, and Tribal governments, the private sector, and citizens residing in the National Heritage Area in conserving, supporting, enhancing, and interpreting the significant historic, cultural, and recreational sites in the National Heritage Area.
- To conserve and interpret the history of the development of hydroelectric power in the United States and its role in developing the American economy.
- To provide appropriate linkages among units of the National Park System within and surrounding the National Heritage Area, to protect, enhance, and interpret resources outside of park boundaries.

The NFNHA Management Plan, required as part of the authorizing legislation (sec. 424), was completed and approved by the Secretary of the Interior in 2012. It operationalizes the NFNHA's stated purposes with the following nine goals:

- Heritage Area Management and Regional Positioning – Work to extend the communication, coordination, and cooperation among governments, communities, and organizations that are essential to regional success in heritage tourism.
- Interpretation and Education – Assure the creation of a high-quality educational and interpretive program, providing partners with a framework and opportunities to inform and inspire a wide range of audiences and nurture public appreciation for the diverse communities, cultures, resources, and environments in the Niagara region.
- Visitor Experience and Heritage Tourism – Offer and promote authentic regional heritage tourism opportunities that communicate a unified message and provide visitors with a transformational experience.
- Engaging our Young People – Provide interactive and engaging opportunities for children, teenagers, and young adults that motivate them to develop knowledge and understanding of the community's important stories; learn useful skills and trades; and become the region's next generation of leaders.
- Outdoor Recreation – Identify and support outdoor activities and programs, eco-tourism opportunities, and recreational access and facilities that enhance heritage area resources and amenities.
- Sense of Place, Sense of Community – Maintain and improve sense of place and community by assisting in the recognition and restoration of significant resources and landscapes and supporting their preservation, conservation, and enhancement.
- Historic Preservation – Maximize the heritage area's significant historic and cultural resources as working community assets.
- Nature and the River – Support restoration and enhancement of the heritage area's natural environment that uses a sustainable approach and engages the public in appreciating the river and nature.
- Economic Revitalization – Foster economic revitalization through advocating the principles and best practices of heritage tourism

The overall mission of the NFNHAI is to enhance public appreciation for the communities, significant historic and natural resources, and landscapes of the Niagara region through a network of heritage area partners who seek to make interpretive, environmental, economic, and social improvements that benefit residents and visitors alike.

2.2.2 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Federal Commission

The NFNHA authorizing legislation designated the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission (the Commission), a 17-member federal commission, to serve as the heritage area's original coordinating entity. This designation was only for the first five

years of the heritage area's existence (sec. 427) and began at the time the NFNHA's authorizing legislation was passes, not the date when the Commission was fully seated. By law the Commission was required to be composed of the following members:

- One (1) member designated by the NPS
- Five (5) members with knowledge and experience of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the Niagara River Greenway Commission, the New York Power Authority, the USA Niagara Development Corporation, or the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation
- One (1) member on the recommendation of the mayor of Niagara Falls, New York
- One (1) member on the recommendation of the mayor of the village of Youngstown, New York
- One (1) member on the recommendation of the mayor of the village of Lewiston, New York
- One (1) member on the recommendation of the Tuscarora Nation
- One (1) member on the recommendation of the Seneca Nation of Indians
- Six (6) members who have an interest in, support for, and expertise appropriate to tourism, regional planning, history and historic preservation, cultural or natural resource management, conservation, recreation, and education, or museum services, of whom:
    - Four (4) members on the recommendation of the two members of the Senate from the State; and
    - Two (2) members on the recommendation of the Member of the House of Representatives whose district encompasses the NHA

Though the authorizing legislation was passed in May of 2008, the Commission was not seated until December of 2010. This fallow period was due to local leaders and organizations being sought and invited to engage in the NHA program only after designation (the NHA designation was primarily driven by political representatives working at the state and federal level) and the lengthy nomination and review process typical of populating federal commissions. Tom Chambers, a representative from Niagara University, served as Chairperson of the commission; he continues to serve as a member of the NFNHAI board. From 2008-2013 Debbie Conway, Superintendent at Fort Stanwix, served as the NPS liaison to the Commission. Superintendent Conway led the effort to establish a management structure for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, which included the seating of the Commission as well as developing and implementing a management plan. She managed the commission meetings, finances and contracts for the management plan, and public participation for commission hearing and the management plan.

NFNHAI

In 2013, at the end of its legislated five-year period of operation, the Commission established the non-profit organization NFNHAI to take over as coordinating entity. The Commission established the NFNHAI in partnership with Niagara University. Representatives from Niagara University have been involved with the NFNHA since its inception; presently, the University administers payroll and benefits for the NFNHAI and provides the NFNHAI with office space. The NFNHAI currently has one full-time employee and two part-time employees who split their time with the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center through a joint task agreement between the organizations (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: NFNHAI Staff

Staff member	Title	Year hired
Sara Capen	Executive Director (full-time)	2011
Ally Spongr	Director and Curator (part-time)	2015
Chris Bacon	Director of Education & Development (part-time)	2017

Sara Capen was hired by the Commission in 2011 as Project Manager for the NFNHA. She was promoted to Executive Director of the NFNHAI in 2013 and helped manage a smooth transition between the Commission and NFNHAI as the coordinating entity for the NHA.

The NFNHAI is overseen by a Board of Directors that sets the goals and policies of the organization, represents the NHA to the public, and ensures adequate resources for its programs. The Board of Directors currently consists of 12 members, several of whom served on the Commission, and represents a diversity of organizations and expertise in the Niagara Region. See Table 2.4 for full details on the NFNHAI Board of Directors.

2.3 Relationship with Partners

Prior to NHA designation, tensions were common between the various municipalities, levels of government (local, state, federal, tribal), stakeholders, and community members in the Niagara region. The NFNHAI immediately prioritized building relationships and organizational trust—not only with, but between partners—to establish the robust, diverse network the NFNHA has today and achieve widespread regional coordination. This improvement in regional coordination was mentioned by nearly every interviewed partner organization and has been crucial for realizing some of the NFNHA's biggest achievements. The NFNHAI is valued for their expertise, dedication,

Table 2.4: NFNHAI Board of Directors as of 2020

Board Member	Time on Board	Position on Board	Organization
Tom Lowe	6 years	President	Field & Fork Network
Kate Broderick Cerrone	6 years	Vice President	Barker Central School District
Marjorie Gillies*	8 years	Secretary	Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society
Jeffrey Williams*	8 years	Treasurer	Business Owner (Village of Lewiston)
Robert Borgatti*	7 years	Director	Niagara County Community College
William Carroll	4 years	Director	Business Owner (City of Niagara Falls)
Tom Chambers*	8 years	Director	Niagara University, Presently with Canisius College
Margaret Hanson*	8 years	Director	Village of Youngstown Tourism Committee
Lynne Neveu	4 years	Director	Citizen Activist (City of Niagara Falls)
John Percy*	4 years	Director	Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation
Craig Touma	5 years	Director	Attorney of Law
Lillian Williams*	8 years	Director	University of Buffalo

** denotes current members who also served on the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission.*

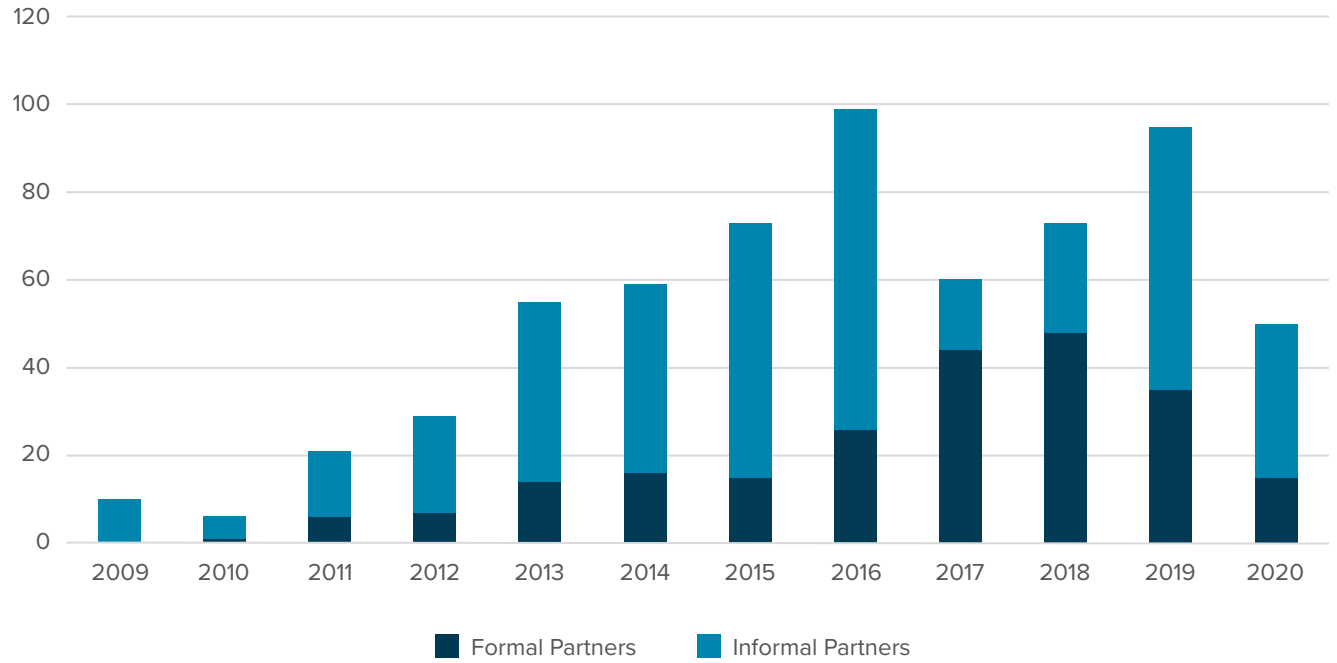
and ability to connect partners and provide oversight and stability for the duration of projects. The NFNHAI serves as an integral partner capable of facilitating collaboration among organizations within the region.

Partnership Network

The NFNHAI has no formal process for designating partners; instead, they are committed to working with any willing organization that shares their mission to generate interpretive, environmental, economic, and social improvements for Niagara region residents and visitors alike. The NFNHAI has developed a consistent core of partners they work with regularly (New York Power Authority, New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Destination Niagara Falls USA, Old Fort Niagara, Oakwood Cemetery, Empire State Development, Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative, Niagara Falls Public Library, Niagara Falls City School District, USA-Niagara Development Corp., Niagara University) and other partners they work with on a case-by-case basis dependent on the year's priorities and initiatives.

While the NFNHAI has no formal process to designate partners, this term is used to distinguish between types of collaborators in the NHA's Annual Program Reports to the NPS. For these purposes "formal partners" are the organizations who directly collaborate with the NHNHAI and are substantially involved in heritage area projects and programs. Having a formal agreement is not a requirement for an organization to be considered a formal partner. An example of a "formal partner" for the NFNHAI is Old Fort Niagara, with whom the NFNHAI has partnered to provide educational opportunities for years. "Informal partners" are those organizations which cooperate or coordinate with the NFNHAI on projects and programs but are not substantially involved in said work. An example of an "informal partner" for the NFNHAI is the Courtyard Marriott, the location of an historic photo display installed by the NFNHAI. Figure 2.3 breaks down the evolution of the NFNHAI partnership network over time. The rate of growth for both formal and informal partners increased significantly after the NFNHAI was established in 2013, and in years where the NFNHAI saw a decline in overall partners they were still able to focus on and grow a base of formal partners.

Figure 2.3: NFNHAI's Partnership Network, 2009-2020



Niagara University

Niagara University is an instrumental partner for the NFNHA. Since designation, representatives of the University have been involved with the heritage area and the school functioned as a neutral meeting place for the NFNHA during development of its management plan and in the early stages of program implementation and growth. At the time of designation, political tensions in the Niagara Region were high; the University served as an impartial party, not tied to any one municipality or agenda.

Currently, the NFNHAI has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Niagara University to administer payroll/benefits and provide office space on campus. Through this arrangement the NFNHAI has been able to form meaningful relationships with the University's Disability Awareness Training Program and the Niagara Global Tourism Institute. Over the years the University has also provided space for NHA trainings and conferences, and NFNHAI Executive Director Sara Capen has served as an adjunct professor in the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management. The NFNHAI's relationship with Niagara University has been crucial for realizing many of the heritage area's goals, first and foremost engaging, uplifting, and investing in young people to become the region's next generation of leaders. Tom Chambers, former commission chair, board chair and now current board member, was a Professor of History at Niagara University and provided the foundation for this longstanding partnership.

NPS

In addition to providing core funding, the National Park Service acts in a supportive/advisory capacity for the NFNHAI. There is no local NPS Park Unit serving as an official NFNHAI partner (the closest Park unit at time of designation was Fort Stanwix, located in Rome, NY approximately 200 miles from Niagara Falls), and though supported by Superintendent Conway, the NFNHAI staff sometimes felt a bit isolated in their work in early stages of NHA development. Ultimately the relationship with the NPS has been consistent and strong. NFNHAI staff have participated in NPS trainings and workshops and formed partnerships with other NHAs.

Alliance of National Heritage Areas

The Alliance of National Heritage Areas (ANHA) is a membership and advocacy organization which represents the majority of the Congressionally designated NHAs throughout the United States. The ANHA serves as a unified voice on interests related to NHAs, facilitates partnerships and networks between NHAs, and educates key constituencies about the NHA program. The NFNHAI has been a member of the ANHA since 2012 and hosted the ANHA's Fall 2014 meeting. Sara Capen, the NFNHAI's Executive Director, has served as the Chairperson of the ANHA since 2016. Under Sara's leadership the ANHA has grown to become more representative of the variety of heritage areas designated.

2.4 NFNHA Timeline

Since its designation, the NFNHA has worked to introduce and promote many heritage related programs and initiatives for the benefit of the Niagara region, its residents, and its visitors. Figure 2.4 provides a timeline of significant activities and events during the existence of the heritage area. A more extensive timeline is included as Appendix D to this report. Many of these activities and accomplishments are referenced in the following sections of this report.

Figure 2.4: Abbreviated Timeline

Year	Activity
2008	• Public law 110-229 passed designating the NFNHA
2009	• Developed RFP and awarded contract for Heritage Area Management Plan
2010	• NFNHA Commission seated
2012	• Developed first educational fieldtrips to Old Fort Niagara • Approval of NFNHA management plan
2013	• Transitioned to a non-profit • Developed NFNHA Long-Range Interpretive Plan
2014	• Launched NFNHA website and social media accounts • Launched Junior Rangers program • Oakwood Cemetery listed on National Register • Completion of Schoellkopf Power Plant Digital History Project
2015	• Released NFNHA Destination Brochure and Map • Hired a Project Coordinator (current title Director and Curator) who splits time between the NFNHA and the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center (the Heritage Center) • Digitization of 1,000+ photographs help by the NF Public Library that track the rise and decline of the power and industry story of NF • Began Heritage River Tours Program • Expanded educational programing at Old Fort Niagara to become “Fridays on the Frontier”
2016	• Launched Discover Niagara shuttle • Completed the Freedom Crossing Exhibit redesign
2017	• Designed and installed the Courtyard Marriott and Power City Eatery Exhibitions utilizing previously digitized historical photographs • Hired a Director of Education who splits time between the NFNHA and the Heritage Center
2018	• Opened the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center • Expanded Discover Niagara Shuttle • Further expanded Old Fort Niagara educational program to “Fall Frontier Days”
2019	• Secured a 1% increase in the occupancy tax to sustainably fund the Discover Niagara Shuttle • Developed a walking trail starting in the North End of Niagara Falls that included streetscape improvements, crosswalks, and murals • The Heritage Center received the Award of Excellence from the American Association for State & Local History • Began development of strategic plan
2020	• Digitization of Oakwood Cemetery burial records • Lunched first phase of Niagara Falls Public Library Local History Inventory Project • Discover Niagara Shuttle re-purposed for COVID relief and voting support • The Heritage Center launched a virtual tour program • Updated and released a new website • Expanded public art imitative, completion of 5 new murals

Section 3: Fulfillment of Authorizing Legislation + Management Plan

3.1 Goals and Objectives of the NFNHA

In 2008 the authorizing legislation (Public Law 110-229) for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area (NFNHA) was signed into law, recognizing the Niagara Region's nationally important natural and cultural legacies. Upon designation, the NFNHA and its coordinating entity (at that time the NFNHA Commission) were tasked with creating a comprehensive management plan that outlined policies, goals, strategies, and recommendations for telling the story of the heritage of the area and encouraged long-term resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development.

In 2009, while the Commission was in process of being seated, NPS helped hire a consulting team composed of representatives from John Milner Associates, Heritage Strategies, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Bergmann Associates to begin development of the NFNHA Management Plan. The 2005 Niagara National Heritage Area Feasibility Study served as the foundation for the plan. (The Feasibility Study was the outcome

Table 3.1: NFNHA Planning Documents

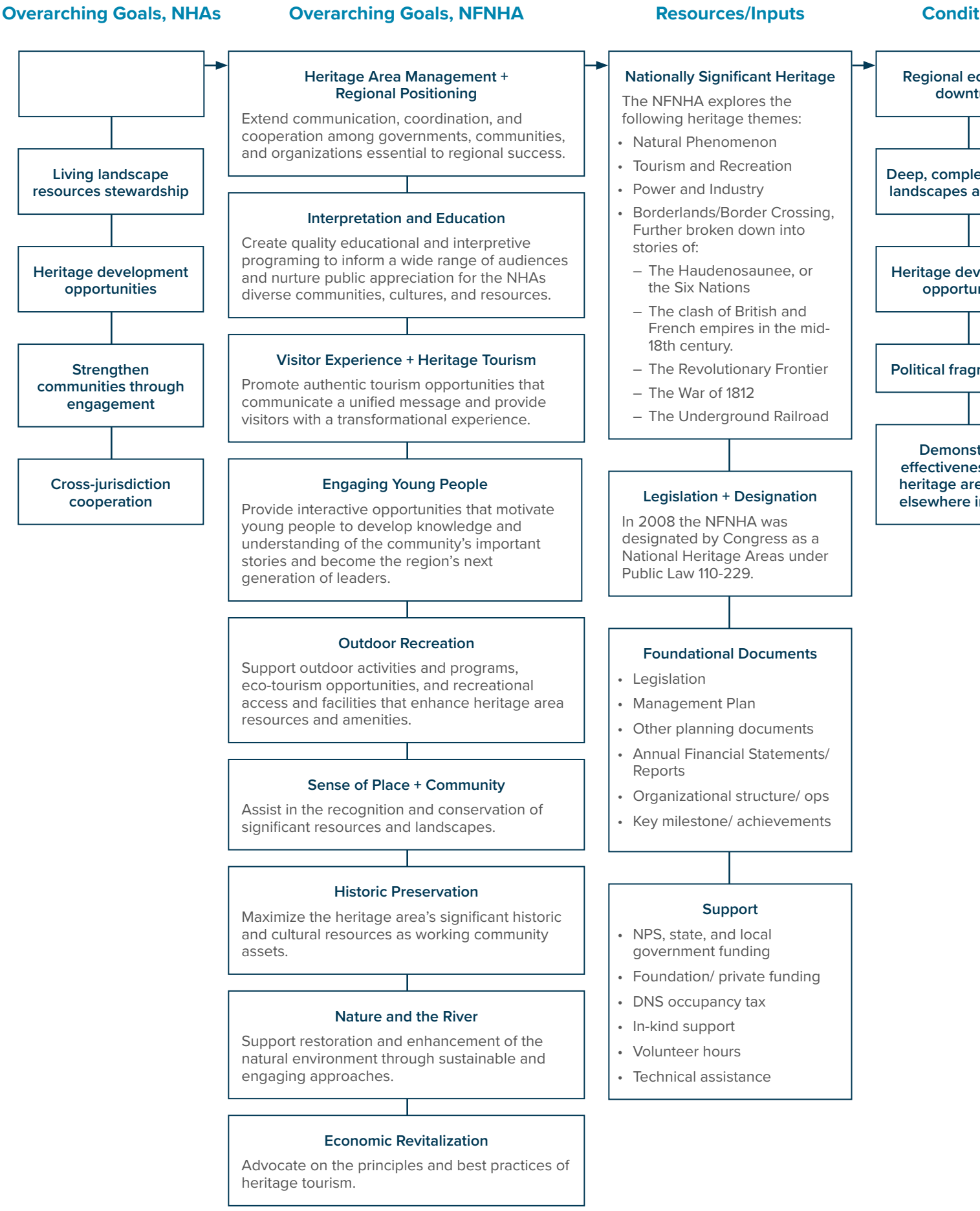
Year	Document	Purpose
2005	Niagara National Heritage Area Study	To determine the feasibility of establishing a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area
2012	NFNHA Environmental Assessment	To analyze the action, evaluate alternatives, identify impacts, and determine an environmentally preferred means of undertaking a federal action
2012	NFNHA Management Plan	To provide management guidance and structure for the NFNHA, as required by its authorizing legislation
2013	NFNHA Long-Range Interpretive Plan	To outline recommendations for future interpretive services, facilities, and media for the NFNHA
2015	Baseline Study for NFNHAI	To conduct visitor research, evaluate findings to provide data on present visitors' sociodemographic and psycho-graphic factors, and to inventory key statistics at attractions and services within the NFNHA
2017	DNS Economic Impact Study	To conduct an economic impact study highlighting the economic and social benefits of the Discover Niagara Shuttle on Niagara County, specifically its effect in increasing tourism and spending in the region.
2021	NFNHA Strategic Plan*	To expand upon the heritage area's 2012 management plan and cultivate organizational sustainability.
2021	Heritage Center Strategic Plan*	To develop an updated vision and management plan for the Niagara Fall Underground Railroad Heritage Center.

** These documents were incomplete as of the writing of this report and were not incorporated into the evaluation.*

Figure 3.1: Purposes, Goals, and Activities of the NFNHA

Purposes Specified in Legislation	NFNHA Management Plan Goals	NFNHA Activities
To recognize the national importance of the natural and cultural legacies of the area, as demonstrated in the 2005 NPS report entitled "Niagara National Heritage Area Study" To preserve, support, conserve, and interpret the natural, scenic, cultural, and historic resources within the NHA To promote heritage, cultural, and recreational tourism and to develop educational and cultural programs for visitors and the general public To recognize and interpret important events and geographic locations representing key developments in American history and culture, including Native American, Colonial American, European American, and African American heritage To enhance a cooperative management framework to assist State, local, and Tribal governments, the private sector, and citizens residing in the NHA in conserving, supporting, enhancing, and interpreting the significant historic, cultural, and recreational sites To conserve and interpret the history of the development of hydroelectric power in the US and its role in developing the American economy To provide appropriate linkages among units of the NPS within and surrounding the NHA, to protect, enhance, and interpret resources outside of park boundaries	Work to extend the communication, coordination, and cooperation among governments, communities, and organizations that are essential to regional success in heritage tourism Assure the creation of a high-quality educational and interpretive program, providing partners with a framework and opportunities to inform and inspire a wide range of audiences and nurture public appreciation for the diverse communities, cultures, resources, and environments in the Niagara region Offer and promote authentic regional heritage tourism opportunities that communicate a unified message and provide visitors with a transformational experience Provide interactive and engaging opportunities for children, teenagers, and young adults that motivate them to develop knowledge and understanding of the community's important stories; learn useful skills and trades; and become the region's next generation of leaders Identify and support outdoor activities and programs, eco-tourism opportunities, and recreational access and facilities that enhance heritage area resources and amenities Maintain and improve sense of place and community by assisting in the recognition and restoration of significant resources and landscapes and supporting their preservation, conservation, and enhancement Maximize significant historic and cultural resources as working community assets Support restoration and enhancement of the heritage area's natural environment that uses a sustainable approach and engages the public in appreciating the river and nature Foster economic revitalization through advocating the principles and best practices of heritage tourism	Education and Interpretation Preservation and Conservation Regional Connectivity and Enhanced Visitor Experiences Community and Economic Development

Figure 3.2: Logic Model


Overarching Goals, NHAs
Overarching Goals, NFNHA
Resources/Inputs
Condit
Living landscape resources stewardship
Heritage development opportunities
Strengthen communities through engagement
Cross-jurisdiction cooperation
Heritage Area Management + Regional Positioning
Extend communication, coordination, and cooperation among governments, communities, and organizations essential to regional success.
Interpretation and Education
Create quality educational and interpretive programing to inform a wide range of audiences and nurture public appreciation for the NHAs diverse communities, cultures, and resources.
Visitor Experience + Heritage Tourism
Promote authentic tourism opportunities that communicate a unified message and provide visitors with a transformational experience.
Engaging Young People
Provide interactive opportunities that motivate young people to develop knowledge and understanding of the community's important stories and become the region's next generation of leaders.
Outdoor Recreation
Support outdoor activities and programs, eco-tourism opportunities, and recreational access and facilities that enhance heritage area resources and amenities.
Sense of Place + Community
Assist in the recognition and conservation of significant resources and landscapes.
Historic Preservation
Maximize the heritage area's significant historic and cultural resources as working community assets.
Nature and the River
Support restoration and enhancement of the natural environment through sustainable and engaging approaches.
Economic Revitalization
Advocate on the principles and best practices of heritage tourism.
Nationally Significant Heritage
The NFNHA explores the following heritage themes:
• Natural Phenomenon
• Tourism and Recreation
• Power and Industry
• Borderlands/Border Crossing, Further broken down into stories of:
– The Haudenosaunee, or the Six Nations
– The clash of British and French empires in the mid-18th century.
– The Revolutionary Frontier
– The War of 1812
– The Underground Railroad
Legislation + Designation
In 2008 the NFNHA was designated by Congress as a National Heritage Areas under Public Law 110-229.
Foundational Documents
• Legislation
• Management Plan
• Other planning documents
• Annual Financial Statements/ Reports
• Organizational structure/ ops
• Key milestone/ achievements
Support
• NPS, state, and local government funding
• Foundation/ private funding
• DNS occupancy tax
• In-kind support
• Volunteer hours
• Technical assistance
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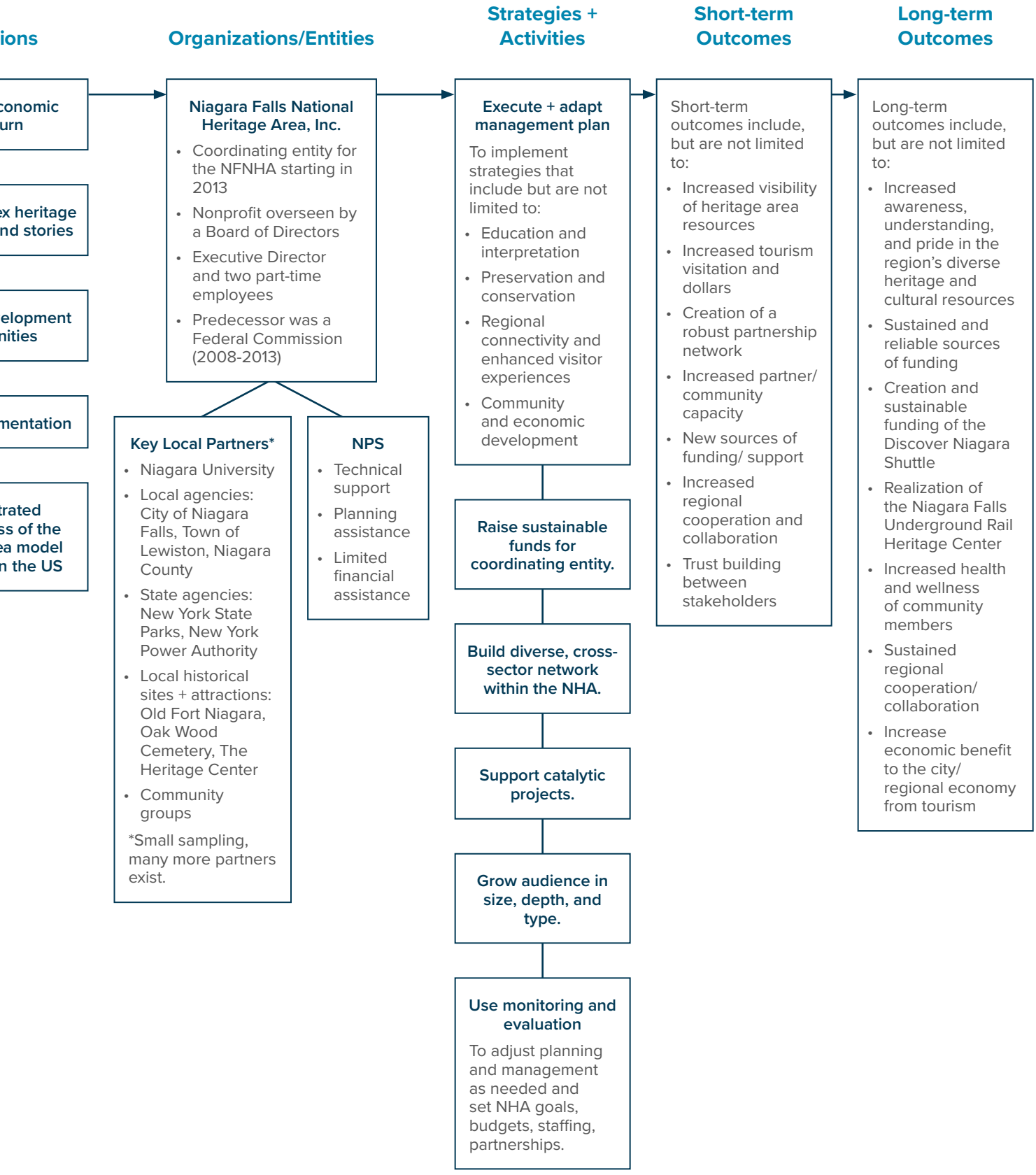
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Organizations/Entities
Strategies + Activities
Short-term Outcomes
Long-term Outcomes
Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc.
Coordinating entity for the NFNHA starting in 2013
Nonprofit overseen by a Board of Directors
Executive Director and two part-time employees
Predecessor was a Federal Commission (2008-2013)
Key Local Partners*
Niagara University
Local agencies: City of Niagara Falls, Town of Lewiston, Niagara County
State agencies: New York State Parks, New York Power Authority
Local historical sites + attractions: Old Fort Niagara, Oak Wood Cemetery, The Heritage Center
Community groups
*Small sampling, many more partners exist.
NPS
Technical support
Planning assistance
Limited financial assistance
Execute + adapt management plan
To implement strategies that include but are not limited to:
Education and interpretation
Preservation and conservation
Regional connectivity and enhanced visitor experiences
Community and economic development
Raise sustainable funds for coordinating entity.
Build diverse, cross-sector network within the NHA.
Support catalytic projects.
Grow audience in size, depth, and type.
Use monitoring and evaluation
To adjust planning and management as needed and set NHA goals, budgets, staffing, partnerships.
Short-term outcomes include, but are not limited to:
Increased visibility of heritage area resources
Increased tourism visitation and dollars
Creation of a robust partnership network
Increased partner/ community capacity
New sources of funding/ support
Increased regional cooperation and collaboration
Trust building between stakeholders
Long-term outcomes include, but are not limited to:
Increased awareness, understanding, and pride in the region's diverse heritage and cultural resources
Sustained and reliable sources of funding
Creation and sustainable funding of the Discover Niagara Shuttle
Realization of the Niagara Falls Underground Rail Heritage Center
Increased health and wellness of community members
Sustained regional cooperation/ collaboration
Increase economic benefit to the city/ regional economy from tourism

of Senator Charles Schumer and Congressman John LaFalce asking the National Park Service to explore strategies for potential NPS partnerships in the Niagara Falls area and the impetus for designation of the NFNHA.) After being seated in 2010, the Commission was a key participant in the development of the management plan. The consultants worked closely with the Commission and a wide variety of community partners to develop the NFNHA Management Plan, which was approved and signed by the Secretary of the Interior in 2012. This management plan continues to serve as the primary guiding document for the NFNHA. Table 3.1 shows a list of additional NFNHA planning documents and their purposes.

The mission of the NFNHA is to enhance public appreciation for the communities, significant historic and natural resources, and landscapes of the Niagara region through a network of heritage area partners who seek to make interpretive, environmental, economic, and social improvements that benefit residents and visitors alike. This mission is based on a list of seven purposes outlined in the heritage area's authorizing legislation and nine key goals recognized in the NFNHA Management Plan (see section 2.2.1). As an organizational device—to best asses the extent to which the NFNHA has fulfilled the intents of its authorizing legislation and management plan, as well as to track the NFNHA's impacts on the Niagara region—the evaluation team has framed the work of the NFNAH around four overarching activity areas:

- Education and interpretation
- Preservation and conservation
- Regional connectivity and enhanced visitor experiences
- Community and economic development

The relationship between the NFNHA's legislative purposes, management goals, and activity areas is displayed in Figure 3.1.

3.2 Activities and Impacts

Building on data-gathering and conversations with both NFNHA and NPS representatives, the evaluation team developed a logic model (Figure 3.2) to serve as a visual representation of the NFNHA's work: overarching goals; resources and key partnerships; activities and strategies implemented to realize goals; intended short- and long-term outcomes; and the linkages among these categories.

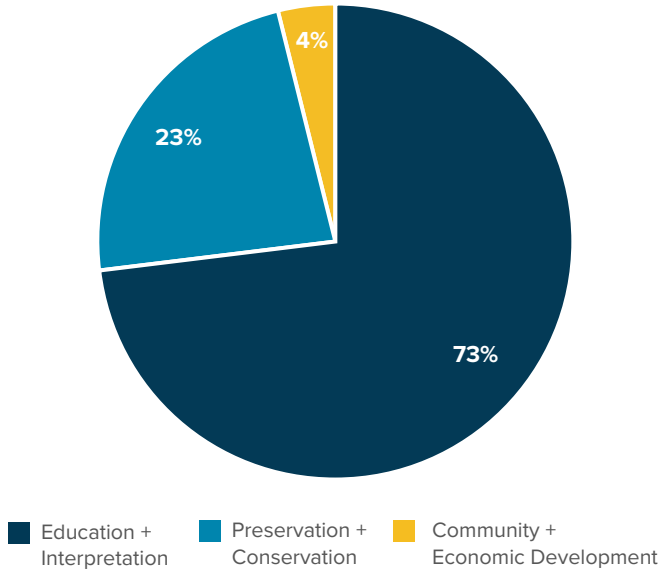
Although this logic model categorizes various activities, initiatives, and programs into types or "activity areas," it is important to note that many, if not all, of the NFNHA's undertakings serve multiple goals and span multiple activity areas, as displayed in Figure 3.1. The NFNHA has successfully pursued and integrated work spanning the four activity areas identified in the evaluation framework—education and interpretation, preservation and conservation, regional connectivity and enhanced visitor experiences, and community and

Table 3.2: Number and Amount of Grants Awarded Over Time

Year	Total Grants Awarded	Total Grant Dollars Awarded
2011	5	$33,865
2012	1	$47,700
2013	7	$48,806
2014	18	$39,488
2015	10	$76,724
2016	3	$30,124
2017	4	$28,000
2018	–	–
2019	–	–
2020	9	$160,343
Total	57	$465,050

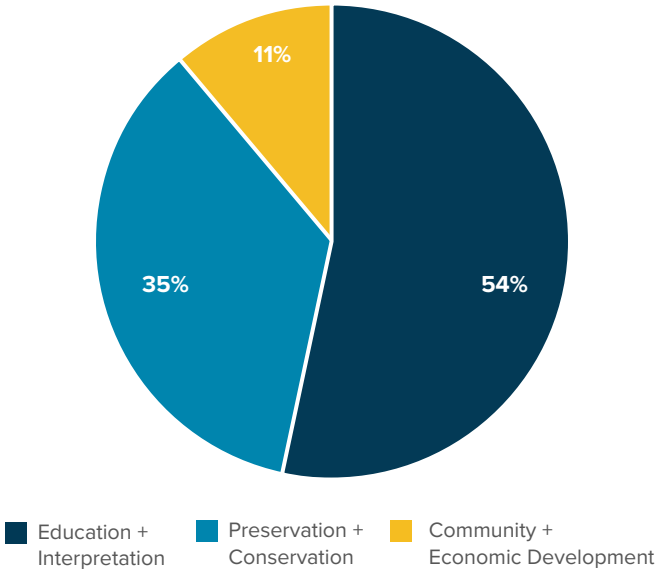
Grants were not administered in 2018 and 2019 as the NFNHAI chose to focus on other ways to best realize its goals.

Figure 3.3: NFNHA Grants Awarded by Activity Area 2011-2020



For the above chart n = 52. Grants awarded from 2011-2012 were not fully specified by category and thus have been partially omitted.

Figure 3.4: NFNHA Grant Spending by Activity Area 2011-2020



For the above chart the total amount is $385,142. Grants awarded from 2011-2012 were not fully specified by category and thus have been partially omitted.

economic development. Again, these categories were prescribed by the evaluation team, not the heritage area, as an organizational device for the evaluation. Additionally, the programs and initiatives discussed in this section were selected to serve as informative and specific examples of the NFNHAI's work; for a complete look at the NFNHA and its accomplishments over time, please see Appendix D (full timeline).

Most NHAs administer robust granting programs to support a variety of heritage area initiatives. This has not been a key component of the NFNHA's approach to achieving its goals and purposes. The NFNHAI quickly realized that formal grant programs and opportunities were missing many of the most deserving (underrepresented and underfunded) organizations, which often lacked capacity and technical experience to apply for formal grants (or, as in the case of indigenous partners, choose to engage with federal funding and organizations only on a limited basis). While the NFNHAI administers a limited number of grants that have supported valuable heritage area activities (see Table 3.2 for a breakdown of grants by year and Figures 3.3 and 3.4 for a break down of grants by activity area), they focus the majority of their efforts and funding on targeted ways to uplift the communities, cultures, and stories of the Niagara region (through direct partnerships, for instance). The variety of ways in which the NFNHAI has accomplished these goals discussed below, including documented examples in each of the four activity areas.

3.2.1 EDUCATION + INTERPRETATION

Heritage area activities that fall into the category of education and interpretation are those that foster public support, appreciation, and deeper understanding of the NFNHA through telling the multiplicity of stories that contribute to its natural, historical, and cultural significance. These activities relate to many of the NFNHA's stated goals, but are most strongly aligned with the following:

- Assure the creation of a high-quality educational and interpretive program, providing partners with a framework and opportunities to inform and inspire a wide range of audiences and nurture public appreciation for the diverse communities, cultures, resources, and environments in the Niagara region.

- Provide interactive and engaging opportunities for children, teenagers, and young adults that motivate them to develop knowledge and understanding of the community's important stories; learn useful skills and trades; and become the region's next generation of leaders.

Fall Frontier Days at Old Fort Niagara

Old Fort Niagara (OFN) has been a long-time partner of the NFNHA. Together OFN and the NFNHAI have been able to grow and develop a robust educational program, known as Fall Frontier Days, that aligns with the New York State Common Core Curriculum Standards and is available as a field trip option to any school in Western New York.

In 2012 OFN received their first education grant from the NFNHA to create an educational program commemorating the bicentennial of the War of 1812. Following the design of this program, the NFNHA was awarded a National Park Foundation "America's Best Idea" Grant that provided admissions and bus transportation to OFN for Niagara Falls students. Each year since the NFNHAI has worked with OFN

Table 3.3: Students Served by the Old Fort Niagara Education Programs Over Time

Year	Participants
2013	1,000
2014	1,500
2015	4,000
2016	2,000
2017	2,600
2018	4,726
2019	3,882
2020	_
Total	19,708

Education programs we're unable to be offered in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The French Castle at Old Fort Niagara, situated at the mouth of the Niagara River on Lake Ontario. (Photo source: Kaitlyn Levesque)

to expand the programs. Presently, Fall Frontier Days feature more than 25 interactive learning stations that exemplify life in colonial America which are offered to both 4th and 7th grade classrooms across Western New York (close to 30 school districts) free of charge. The program specifically seeks to benefit underserved schools and communities that could not have otherwise afforded such a trip; despite living in or close to the NFNHA, the majority of students who participate in Fall Frontier Days are first time visitors to the fort. Table 3.3 provides a breakdown of the number of students served by OFN education programs each year.

Junior Ranger Program

The Junior Ranger Program is an activity-based program available at NPS sites across the country. Junior Ranger Programs are site specific and meant to engage young visitors (though adults often participate as well) in a series of educational activities that culminate in a badge and certificate. The NFNHA Junior Ranger Program highlights a dozen sites in the Niagara Falls heritage area and has helped extend the stay of visitors by providing family friendly activities.

The NFNHA Junior Ranger Program was an early success for the NFNHAI; it helped get people, both visitors and locals, excited about the heritage area and the many resources available for exploration. Since its debut in the summer of 2014, thousands of Junior Ranger booklets have been distributed by more than 20 heritage area partners. The Junior Ranger booklets have been praised by heritage area partners as the best official guide to the Niagara Falls area and has helped build visibility for smaller sites. The program has also been utilized by NFNHA partner organizations who administer summer camps to develop activities around the guidebook.

Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center

In 2018, the NFNHAI spearheaded a collaborative effort to open the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center (the Heritage Center). The NFNHAI began collaborating with the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Commission in 2012 and eventually developed a shared staffing agreement that allowed both organizations to work together on opening the Heritage Center.

The Heritage Center preserves the historic role of the people of Niagara Falls in facilitating freedom for the oppressed. The places and stories associated with this network of freedom seekers, free African Americans, and abolitionists evoke powerful themes in American history and celebrate the bravery of the men and women who risked their own lives to achieve the most basic rights of liberty. The Heritage Center is the first cultural attraction to open in the Niagara region in 37 years.

Through the shared staffing agreement, the NFNHAI hired two additional employees who led efforts to design and install the exhibit and ultimately run the Heritage Center. Under NFNHAI management, the Heritage Center received the 2019 Award of Excellence from the American Association for State & Local History for Leadership in History for Exhibitions. Table 3.4 provides the Heritage Center's yearly visitation numbers to date.

Although highlighted as an example of education and interpretation, the Heritage Center significantly contributes to all activity areas. It is a vital heritage resource that functions as a tourist destination, provides new research and learning opportunities, has championed progressive and inclusive storytelling, and serves as a much-loved community center.

Table 3.4: General admission visitors to the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center, 2018–2020

Year	General Admissions Visitors
2018	8,513
2019	12,571
2020	6,083
Total	27,167

The Heritage Center opened in May of 2018. Visitation in 2020 was severely limited by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Grants

Education and interpretation based programs have been the primary recipients of the NFNHA's limited grant program, receiving more than half of all grant dollars and nearly three-quarters of all awarded grants between 2013 and 2020 (see Figures 3.3 and 3.4). In addition to the larger programs discussed above, these grants have helped support interpretive signage, the development of teaching materials, walking tours, summer camps, and exhibits throughout the heritage area.

3.2.2 PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION

Heritage area activities that fall into the category of preservation and conservation are those that support the development, preservation, and public access to historical, cultural, and natural resources within the NFNHA. These activities relate to many of the NFNHA's stated goals, but are most strongly aligned with the following:

- Identify and support outdoor activities and programs, eco-tourism opportunities, and recreational access and facilities that enhance heritage area resources and amenities.
- Maximize the heritage area's significant historic and cultural resources as working community assets.

Recreation and Environmental Conservation

Since 2017 the NFNHAI has partnered with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, a nonprofit organization that protects and restores the region's waterways and surrounding ecosystems, to offer hiking, biking, kayaking, and snowshoe tours that connect visitors and residents to the impressive natural resources within the NFNHA and encourages exploration of the river beyond the falls. Hikes with the Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper were one of the very limited in-person activities the NFNHAI was able to support in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Documentation and Digitization of Historic Resources

The NFNHAI has supported multiple efforts to document and digitize historical collections held by local organizations, thus preserving vital heritage area resources that can and have been utilized for new research, interpretation, and exhibitions that contribute to telling the many stories of the NHA.

Niagara Outfitters partners with the NFNHA to lead kayaking along the lower Niagara River. (Photo source: Kaitlyn Levesque)

Since 2013 the NFNHAI has been working with the Niagara Falls Public Library (NFPL) to document and digitize a variety of collections. Several grants from the NFNHAI supported the digitization of nearly 10,000 photographs from within the NFPL local history department that show the building and operation of numerous hydroelectric power plants and document other components of power and industry in the Niagara region. As a direct outcome of the digitization process, the NFNHAI was able to support the curation and instillation of select power and industry images in both the Niagara Falls Courtyard Marriott Hotel and Power City Eatery sandwich shop. The urban renewal era of the 1970s resulted in widespread demolition of historic properties in Niagara Falls, creating a loss of physical connectivity and association

with the significant industries that generated the first wide-scale use of hydroelectric power in the world. These photographs honor and celebrate the industrial heritage of the region by connecting visitors and residents alike with a forgotten history.

After determining that nearly half of the Library's local history collection was uncatalogued and endangered due to environmental and structural building conditions, the NFNHAI—in partnership with the City of Niagara Falls and the NFPL—has begun a complete inventory of the collection. As a part of the project the NFNHAI is also developing future preservation plans for these resources, which serves as an invaluable portal to the history of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, and the greater Western New York region. In the summer of 2020, the first phase of inventory was completed; more than 760 cubic feet of material (mostly paper) was inventoried and documented according to subject matter and preservation concerns. This project is ongoing.

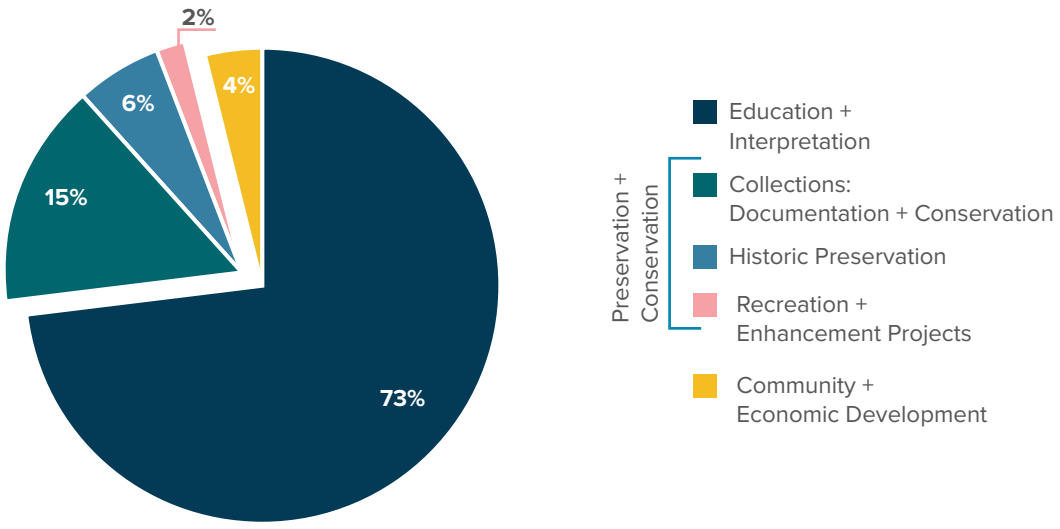
The NFNHAI has also supported Oakwood Cemetery, the first public cemetery in Niagara Falls, in professionally digitizing its 19,900 burial records and developing a tool for searching the records.

Prior to digitization the handwritten burial records were kept in a single fireproof safe, which hindered research opportunities and posed a preservation threat. Founded in 1852, Oakwood Cemetery holds some of the region's oldest records and provides a unique glimpse into the early life of Niagara Falls and its prominent residents; it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2014 with help from the NFNHAI.

Grants

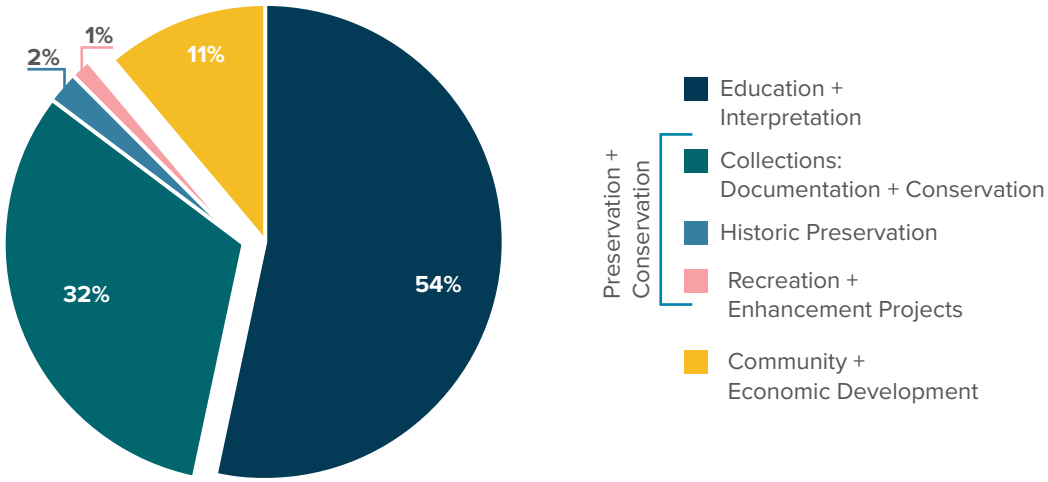
The second largest recipient of grant dollars and awards has been initiatives that focus on the documentation and conservation of historical collections; these include the Niagara Falls Public Library and Oakwood Cemetery projects discussed above (Figures 3.5 and 3.6). Preservation and conservation projects (which combine collections, historic preservation, and recreation initiatives) have received 35% of all grant dollars and nearly a quarter of all awarded grants between 2013 and 2020; these grants have funded National Register nomination assistance and the development of historical walking tours, among other initiatives.

Figure 3.5: NFNHA Grants Awarded by Activity Area 2011-2020



For the above chart n = 52. Grants awarded from 2011-2012 were not fully specified by category and thus have been partially omitted.

Figure 3.6: NFNHA Grant Spending by Activity Area 2011-2020



For the above char the total amount it $385,142. Grants awarded from 2011-2012 were not fully specified by category and thus have been partially omitted.

3.2.3 REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY + ENHANCED VISITOR EXPERIENCES

Heritage area activities that fall into the category of regional connectivity and enhanced visitor experiences are those that seek to develop quality and reliable heritage-tourism related infrastructure throughout the NFNHA. This infrastructure can be tangible (transportation networks) or intangible (improved interpersonal relationships between key stakeholders) but ultimately serves to improve the visitor experience, unifying the historical, cultural, and natural elements of the NFNHA and encouraging visitor exploration of the many resources the region has to offer. These activities relate to many of the NFNHA's stated goals, but are most strongly aligned with the following:

- Work to extend the communication, coordination, and cooperation among governments, communities, and organizations that are essential to regional success in heritage tourism.
- Offer and promote authentic regional heritage tourism opportunities that communicate a unified message and provide visitors with a transformational experience.

Regional Cooperation

Prior to the development of the NFNHAI, stakeholders expressed that regional cooperation and cohesion in Niagara region was largely nonexistent; years of disinvestment had resulted disparate agencies, municipalities, and communities with no desire to work together. The NFNHA, which is designed to take initiative and fill gaps where other organizations are unable to do so, has served as a catalyst for the Niagara region, unifying stakeholders to combine resources and develop projects that have lasting, positive impacts on the region and strengthen local partnerships.

The heritage area's management plan stressed communication and partnerships above all else; the NFNHAI has focused on building trust and cultivating authentic relationships with regional partners of all sizes and backgrounds. Additionally, the NHA designation has elevated the significance of the area and enabled political representatives from local, state, and federal levels to work together in ways they never did before.

The NFNHA is seen as a unifying force that helps to link together the complex, unique history of the region through storytelling. It erases the barriers that have arisen over time and gives a

richer experience to the area. Tourist infrastructure initiatives such as the NFNHA map and brochure (the first comprehensive guide to the area) and the Discover Niagara Shuttle (discussed in depth below) are two exemplary initiatives that were only made possible by regional cooperation and, through success, have continued to strengthen regional goodwill. For these reasons, partner organizations have identified the designation of the NFNHA as the most transformative opportunity to occur for the Niagara region in decades.

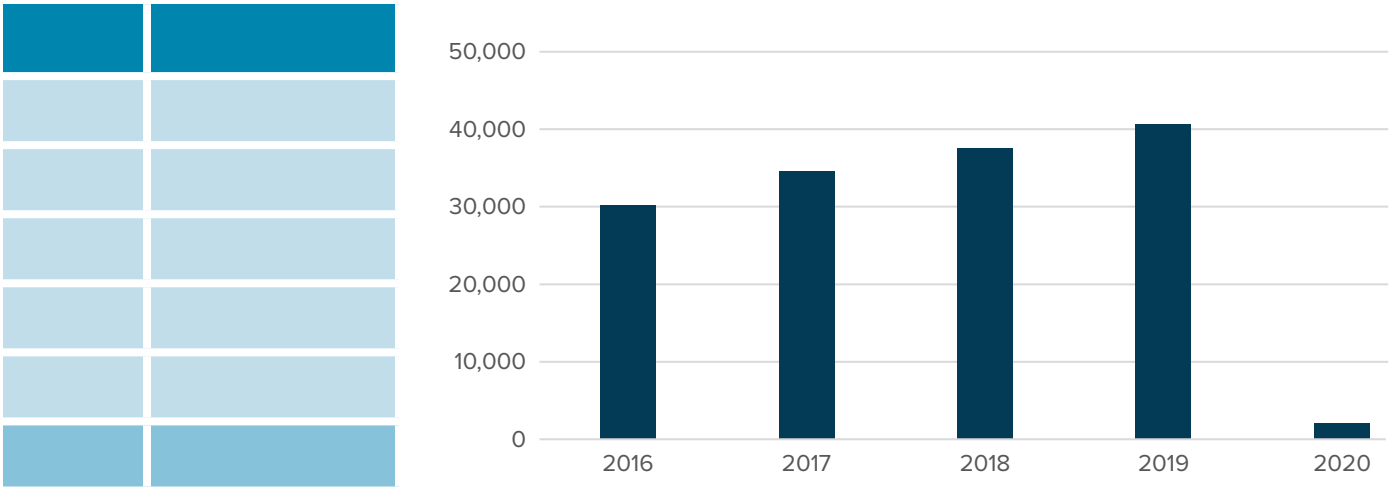
Discover Niagara Shuttle

The Niagara region has severely limited public transportation options, which posed a major challenge for transporting tourists around the area. Over the years several public and private efforts have been launched to address the issue, but none found success. Developing a sustainable, regional transportation solution was identified in the NFNHA management plan as a key need and has been a top priority for the NFNHAI. The Discover Niagara Shuttle (DNS), which provides free hop-on-hop-off shuttle service to more than two dozen stops across the NFNHA during peak tourist season, is widely considered to be the most successful NFNHAI project.

Operation of the shuttle began in 2016 and connected visitors, via small ADA-accessible buses and trollies, to fourteen popular heritage destinations between Niagara Falls and Old Fort Niagara. In 2018 service was expanded for early pick up at hotels and to include three new stops along the route and in 2021 a branch of the shuttle was extended to the nearby city of Lockport. Each year the shuttle has grown in popularity; it is used by both visitors and residents to connect to the natural, historic, and cultural assets within the heritage area (see Figure 3.7 for yearly ridership numbers). The NFNHAI developed heritage area signage, a dedicated website, and an accompanying free mobile application which together provide an easy-to-navigate visitor experience.

Additionally, the NFNHAI has been able to donate the use of the shuttles for dozens of community events within the heritage area. These shuttles have also served as a crucial tool for supporting residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the pandemic the DNS was used to deliver food and Personal Protective Equipment, connect neighborhoods to complimentary Wi-Fi, support high school graduation parades, and transport people to early voting. The shuttle is a true regional and collaborative success story made possible through partnerships with New York State Parks, New York Power Authority, Empire State Development, Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation, Niagara University, City of Niagara

Figure 3.7: Discover Niagara Shuttle Ridership 2016-2020



Operation of the DNS was severely limited in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Discover Niagara Shuttles connects visitors from "the Fort to the Falls' within the NFNHA. (Photo source: Kaitlyn Levesque)

Falls and many more. Although highlighted as an example of regional connectivity and enhanced visitor experiences, the DNS has contributed significantly to community and economic development within the Niagara Region.

Virtual Presence

The NFNHAI manages multiple websites and social media accounts to engage with visitors and local community members, share information and updates, and provide general guidance about the NHA. Beyond a website and social media profiles dedicated to the heritage area, the NFNHAI also manages a website, app, and social media accounts for the Discover Niagara Shuttle, and social media accounts for their growing murals program. NFNHA websites have been visited nearly half a million times (Table 3.5) and across all social media platforms and accounts the NFNHAI has more than 12,000 followers (Table 3.6).

Table 3.5: Session counts for the NFNHA and DNS websites.

Year	NFNHA	DNS	Total
2014	3,224	_	3,224
2015	19,776	_	19,776
2016	76,346	_	76,346
2017	42,685	33,650	76,335
2018	54,940	55,379	110,319
2019	35,034	73,493	108,527
2020	16,191	18,034	34,225
Total	248,196	180,556	428,752

Counts for 2020 are only reflective of January-September. In September of 2020 the NFNHA switched website platforms and were not able to provide comparable data for the remaining months of 2020.

3.4.4 COMMUNITY + ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Heritage area activities that fall into the category of community and economic development are

Table 3.6: Social media followers across all NFNHA accounts as of June 2021.

Profile	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Total
Niagara Falls National Heritage Area	3,941	1,147	843	5,931
Discover Niagara Shuttle	3,151	1,081	351	4,583
Niagara Falls Murals	745	746	137	1,628
Total	7,837	2,974	1,331	12,142

those that increase public use and awareness of the NFNHA, build local community capacity, and include efforts to enhance the economic viability of the region. These activities relate to many of the NFNHA's stated goals, but are most strongly aligned with the following:

- Maintain and improve sense of place and community by assisting in the recognition and restoration of significant resources and landscapes and supporting their preservation, conservation, and enhancement.
- Foster economic revitalization through advocating the principles and best practices of heritage tourism.

Building Diverse Partnerships and Developing Community Capacity

While a primary focus of National Heritage Areas—Niagara Falls included—is improving the visitor experience, the NFNHAI strives to center the local community in all aspects of their work. A major way that the NFNHAI accomplishes this is by seeking out smaller, community-based organizations with whom to form partnerships. The NFNHAI is conscious of the fact that many of these smaller organizations have, in the past, not been recipients of grant funding due to a lack of organizational capacity (grant writing experience, full-time staff, established partnerships, technical expertise, etc.). The NFNHAI takes an active role in seeking out and communicating with such organizations to better understand how the NHA can assist them in achieving shared goals.

Because many of the NFNHA's partners are lacking organizational expertise and/or capacity, the NFNHAI often provides these skills to help realize a variety of projects. When the NFNHAI sponsors a community project it is more than a financial commitment, it is a commitment to provide project management and stability throughout the entire process. This vital assistance is unique and fulfills a much-needed service not otherwise available in the region.

Supporting the Niagara community also means ensuring that a multiplicity of accurate and authentic perspectives is being shared throughout the heritage area. To help achieve this goal, the NFNHAI has sponsored several workshops and trainings for partner organizations centered on decolonizing history and how to interpret and share difficult subject matter with diverse audiences.

Walk to Freedom, the Niagara Falls Mural Project

The NFNHAI often faces an uphill battle to redefine tourism to benefit residents and results in placekeeping that puts the community first; the Walk to Freedom Mural Project in an example of an initiative that achieves this goal. The Mural Project, which surrounds the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center, is an ongoing collaborative public arts project designed to recognize the resistance and resilience of African Americans in Niagara Falls through the creation of more than a dozen murals. Funded by a grant from the New York State Health Foundation, the Mural Project encourages Niagara residents to physically and emotionally connect to the stories and people

The Niagara Mural Project lifts up the local community and activates streetscapes around the Heritage Center. (Photo source: Kaitlyn Levesque)

who shaped their community. Mural artists and concepts were selected through a community-led process and focused on showcasing local talent.

In addition to the murals, the project included the installation of new crosswalks and other streetscape improvements, meant to act as a gateway with improved accessibility between the Highland neighborhood of Niagara Falls and the Heritage Center. As part of the initiative, the NFNHA built a historic walking tour based on research and oral histories that shares the area's remarkable African American History, interprets the murals, and engages the public in health and wellness.

3.2.5 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

It is clear the NFNHA has had a profound and lasting impact on the Niagara region. It has realized the purposes and goals set out in its authorizing legislation and management plan in ways that promote the rich cultural, historical, and environmental resources of the area to visitors without compromising a commitment to the local community. The goals and purposes of the NFNHA are many and broad in scope; by consistently using the management plan as a foundation to build upon, assessing and prioritizing goals, and dedicating itself fully to the project and partners in which it invests, the NFNHAI has proven itself to be a dynamic, capacity-building, value-creating organization.

Though the NFNHA was designated in 2008, there were few initiatives started or impacts made until the completion of the management plan in 2012 and formation of the NFNHAI in 2013. The NFNHAI has managed to address each of the heritage area's purpose and goals in less than a decade. With continued support and additional strategic planning efforts, the NFNHAI is poised to continue to preserve, protect, and promote the region's heritage and communities.

Section 4: Investments + Impacts in the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

Public Law 110-229, the authorizing legislation for the NFNHA, stipulates that following regarding federal appropriations:

> (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Subject to subsection (b), there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subtitle not more than $1,000,000 for any fiscal year. Funds so appropriated shall remain available until expended.
>
> (b) LIMITATION ON TOTAL AMOUNTS APPROPRIATED.—Not more than $15,000,000 may be appropriated to carry out this subtitle.
>
> (c) COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT.—The Federal share of the total cost of any activity under this subtitle shall be not more than 50 percent; the non-Federal contribution may be in the form of in-kind contributions of goods or services fairly valued.

This section of the evaluation explores the public and private investments that support NFNHA activities and how the heritage area's coordinating entity, NFNHAI, has meet the above specified funding requirements.

4.1 Investment in NFNHA Activities

The investments that support NFNHA activities are divided into the following categories:

- Federal NPS Heritage Partnership Program (HPP) Funds: funds that are appropriated to NHAs by Congress and allocated to individual NHAs
- Other Federal NPS Funds: additional in-kind services/funds provided to the NFNHA by the NPS in the form of the time of NPS staff who were part of the Commission.
- Non-Federal Matching Funds: Funds (both cash and in-kind) raised by NFNHAI to meet the heritage area's cost-sharing, or match, requirement, as specified in the authorizing legislation, including investments from state and local government, foundations, non-profit partner organizations, and private donners.

Table 4.1 shows that from 2009-2020 the investments made in the NFNHA totaled more than $11 million dollars. During this period, the NFNHA received $3,054,833 in NPS HPP funding—well below the cap of $15,000,000 set by its authorizing legislation—and has expended $2,863,715 of this allocated HPP funding. The annually expended NPS HPP funds are subject to a 50/50 match requirement (for every dollar in NPS HPP funding spent, the NFNHAI must contribute a dollar secured through non-federal funds). The match requirement is meant to share the federal government's cost for programs with state and local agencies and the private sector, as well as to promote the sustainability of programs past the life of the federal financial award. From 2009-2020 the NFNHA secured $8,215,639 in matching funds, nearly three times the required amount.

Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 show the expended NPS HPP funds, matching funds, and match ratio for the NFNHA by year. A match ratio of 1 denotes and equal expenditure of NPS HPP and matching funds (a 50/50 share of costs), thus a match ratio equal to or greater than 1 indicates that the NFNHA met its legal match requirements. The NFNHA match ratio has been consistently greater than 1, with an overall match ratio of 2.87.

From 2009-2015, as the heritage area was developing its management plan, establishing a non-profit (NFNHAI) to replace the federally established commission as coordinating entity, and building relationships within the region, total NFNHA funding remained below $500,000

Table 4.1: NFNHA Investments 2009-2020

Year	NPS/ HPP Funds Allocated	NPS/ HPP Funds Expended	Other NPS Funds Received	Non-Federal Matching Funds	Total Investment
2009-10	$298,000	$296,326	$49,460	$300,000	$645,786
2011	$147,000	$147,000	$66,320	$204,291	$414,611
2012	$147,000	$147,000	$66,784	$332,450	$546,234
2013	$251,628	_	$39,389	$342,627	$382,016
2014	$300,000	$174,006	$0	$224,022	$398,027
2015	$300,000	$208,287	$0	$262,000	$470,287
2016	$315,000	$591,279	$0	$662,236	$1,253,515
2017	$300,000	$230,000	$0	$1,934,605	$2,164,605
2018	$327,720	$238,000	$0	$1,831,965	$2,069,965
2019	$332,097	$480,988	$0	$1,207,712	$1,688,700
2020	$336,388	$350,829	$0	$913,730	$1,264,559
Total	$3,054,833	$2,863,715	$221,953	$8,215,639	$11,301,306

Although the NFNHA was designated in 2008, no coordinating entity was established until the end of 2010; it is for this reason 2009 and 2010 funds are reported in one row. After approval of the Management Plan by the Secretary of the Interior in 2012 the NFNHA was eligible for, and received, an increase in HPP funding. In 2013 the NFNHA coordinating entity transitioned from a Federal Commission to a Non-profit organization, this resulted in some gaps in recordkeeping on the part of the NPS, most notably the 2013 NPS/HPP Funds Expended.

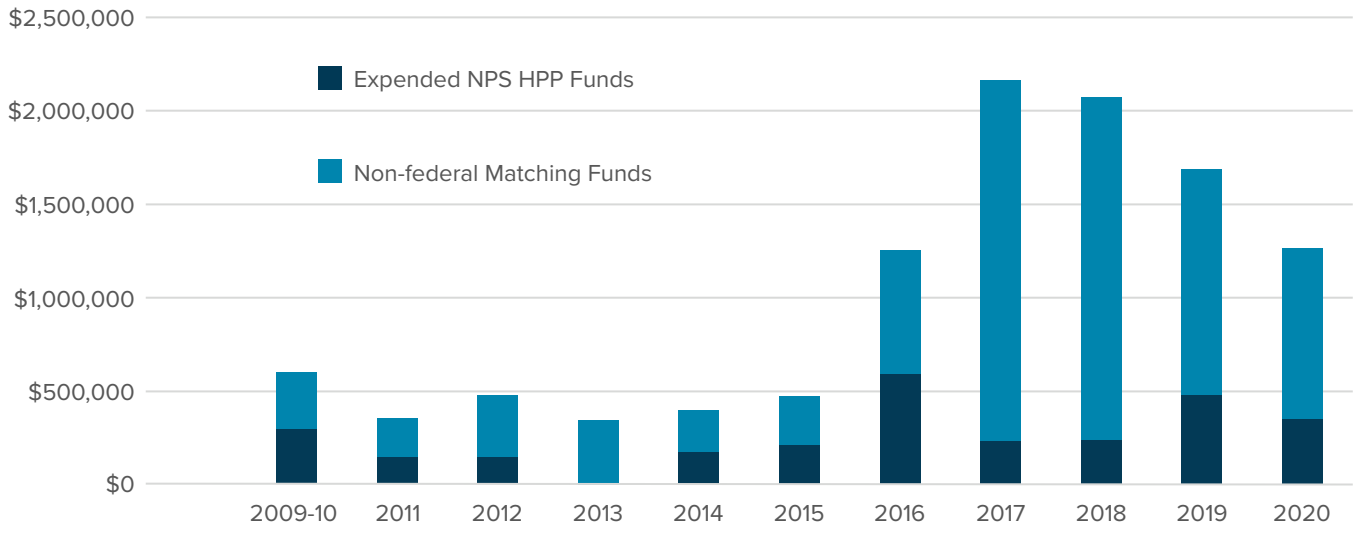
annually. The inaugural year of the Discover Niagara Shuttle (DNS) was 2016. Widely considered to be the NFNHAI's most ambitious and successful project, the DNS was made possible through multifaceted partnerships and sources of funding including from the City of Niagara Falls, the Town of Lewiston, New York Power Authority, Niagara Tourism & Convention Cooperation, Niagara University, New York State Parks, private business, and others. The continued operation of the DNS accounts for a significant amount of the increased investment the NFNHA experienced starting in 2016. Additionally, around this time the NFNHAI began receiving increased support from the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Commission as the two organizations worked together to open the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center, the first cultural attraction to open in the Niagara region in 37 years. In 2020 the NFNHA experienced a dip in non-federal funding as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 respectively provide a breakdown of matching funds by source (state, local, or private/partner organization) and type (cash or in-kind). More than half of the NFNHA's match has been in the form of in-kind donation and only 10% of the funds are from local governments, stressing the importance of the HPP funds in an economically distressed area with limited local capital.

Table 4.2: NFNHA Match Ratio

Year	NPS HPP Funds Expended	Non-Federal Matching Funds	Total	Match Ratio
2009-10	$296,326	$300,000	$596,326	1.01
2011	$147,000	$204,291	$351,291	1.39
2012	$147,000	$332,450	$479,450	2.26
2013	_	$342,627	$342,627	_
2014	$174,006	$224,022	$398,028	1.29
2015	$208,287	$262,000	$470,287	1.26
2016	$591,279	$662,236	$1,253,515	1.12
2017	$230,000	$1,934,605	$2,164,605	8.41
2018	$238,000	$1,831,965	$2,069,965	7.70
2019	$480,988	$1,207,712	$1,688,700	2.51
2020	$350,829	$913,730	$1,264,559	2.60
Total	$2,863,715	$8,215,639	$11,079,353	2.87

Figure 4.1: Expended NPS HPP Funds and Non-Federal Matching Funds 2009-2020



Although the NFNHA was designated in 2008, no coordinating entity was established until the end of 2010; it is for this reason 2009 and 2010 funds are reported in one row. 2013 was a transition year for the NFNHA coordinating entity (from a Federal Commission to a Non-profit) and resulted in some incomplete records on the part of the NPS; it is for this reason that NPS/HPP Funds Expended are not available for the year.

Table 4.3: NFNHA Non-Federal Matching Funds by Source 2009-2020

4.2 Use of Financial Resources

The NFNHAI uses funding to support day-to-day operational expenses, including salary and other administrative costs, as well as programmatic activities—the initiatives and projects that NFNHAI sustains. Table 4.5 provides a breakdown of these yearly expenditures. The single biggest operational expense for the NFNHAI is salary (an expense that directly supports program areas), which has grown slightly over the years as new staff members were hired. Overall, the operational expenses remain in line with the funding received, accounting for less than a quarter of total expenses. The year 2016, when the Discover Niagara Shuttle was launched, saw the largest increase in programmatic spending.

Figure 4.2 shows the allocation of the programmatic expenditures by activity area: education and interpretation, preservation and conservation, regional connectivity and enhanced visitor experiences, and community and economic development. Because the NFNHAI financial statements did not delineate spending by program and many, if not all, of the NFNHAI's undertakings are in service of multiple activity areas, PennPraxis worked with the NFNHAI to provide estimates of spending in the activity areas utilized throughout this evaluation. Examples of the types of programmatic expenses noted in the NFNHAI's financial statements are event sponsorship, public outreach, transportation, education programs, digitization projects, and grant programs—among others.

In line with the priorities of the NFNHAI, the largest expenditures have occurred in areas of regional connectivity and enhanced visitor experience (46% of funds) and education and interpretation (28% of funds), followed closely by community and economic development (22% of funds). Preservation and conservation expenditures accounted for the remaining amount of programmatic spending (4%).

Table 4.4: NFNHA Non-Federal Matching Funds by Type 2009-2020

Year	Cash Matches	In-Kind Matches	Total Matching Funds
2009-10	_	_	$300,000
2011	_	_	$204,291
2012	_	_	$332,450
2013	$21,043	$321,584	$342,627
2014	$8,200	$215,822	$224,022
2015	$0	$262,000	$262,000
2016	$378,180	$284,056	$662,236
2017	$862,157	$1,072,449	$1,934,605
2018	$871,463	$960,502	$1,831,965
2019	$625,729	$581,983	$1,207,712
2020	$380,148	$533,582	$913,730
Total	$3,146,920	$4,231,978	$8,215,639

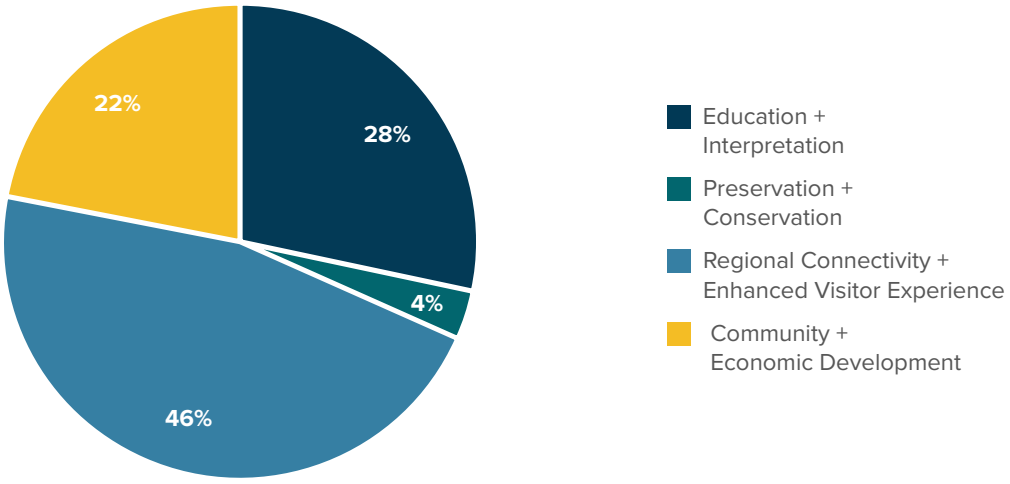
Matching funds from 2009-2012 were reported only as a total match.

Table 4.5 NFNHA Operational and Programmatic Spending 2014-2019

Year	Operational Expenditures	Programmatic Expenditures	Total Expenditures
2014	$137,792	$90,003	$227,795
2015	$152,067	$92,295	$244,362
2016	$203,062	$858,411	$1,061,473
2017	$185,421	$878,218	$1,063,639
2018	$211,770	$847,371	$1,059,141
2019	$233,795	$898,428	$1,132,223
Total	$1,123,907	$3,664,726	$4,788,633

Although the NFNHA was established in 2008, the NFNHAI was not established until 2013. 2013 was a transition year (from the Commission, to the NFNHAI) and detailed financial record keeping did not begin until 2014.

Figure 4.2: NFNHA Programmatic Spending by Activity Area 2014-2019



4.3 Impact of Investment

Based on the data available for analysis, the investments made by NFNHAI have successfully met and exceeded the 50 percent cost-sharing requirement of the NFNHA's authorizing legislation. Between 2010 and 2020, the NFNHAI leveraged more than three times the NPS HPP funds they expended, bringing a total investment of more than $11 million dollars to the Niagara region; of this total investment, $8,215,639, or nearly 75%, was non-federal matching funds (see Table 4.3 above).

In examining the use of NFNHA investment, the evaluation concludes that the NFNHAI has expended said funds in a manner that aligns with the goals and purposes specified by the heritage area's management plan and authorizing legislation.

The Discover Niagara Shuttle

In 2017, the economic consulting firm Tripp Umbach completed an economic impact study for the NFNHA's Discover Niagara Shuttle, utilizing the industry standard software IMPLAN, a micro-computer-based input-output modeling system, for the impact analysis and conservative assumptions for individual spending patterns. The study found that the DNS directly or indirectly impacts Niagara County by means of ridership and tourism, organizational spending, employment opportunities, and government revenue generated by spending in the county. Across these categories, in 2016—the shuttle's inaugural year—the DNS generated $35 million dollars in economic impact to Niagara County, $26.3 million of which was classified as direct impact, based on an operational expense of less than $1 million.

Section 5: Success + Sustainability of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

5.1 Defining Sustainability

The third and final question guiding this evaluation of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area asks how the coordinating entity's management structure, partnerships, and current funding contribute to the heritage area's sustainability. To answer this, we have adopted the definition of sustainability developed by the National Park Service, with assistance from National Heritage Area stakeholders. Sustainability for an NHA is as follows:

> ...the National Heritage Area coordinating entity's continuing ability to work collaboratively and reciprocally with federal, state, community, and private partners through changing circumstances to meet its mission for resource conservation and stewardship, interpretation, education, recreation and economic development of nationally significant resources.

Critical components of sustainability for a National Heritage Area include, but are not limited to:

- The coordinating entity and NPS honoring the legislative mandate of the NHA;
- The coordinating entity's management capacity, including governance, adaptive management (such as strategic planning), staffing, and operations;
- Financial planning and preparedness including the ongoing ability to leverage resources in support of the local network of partners;
- Partnerships with diverse community stakeholders, including the heritage area serving as a hub, catalyst, and/or coordinating entity for ongoing capacity building; communication; and collaboration among local entities;
- Program and project stewardship where the combined investment results in the improved economic value and ultimately long-term quality of life of that region; and
- Outreach and marketing to engage a full and diverse range of audiences.[2]

The following sections assess the NFNHA's ability to meet these components of sustainability by drawing on data previously discussed in the evaluation.

5.2 Honoring the Legislative Mandate of the NFNHA

As discussed in Section 3 of this report, the heritage area's authorizing legislation (Public Law 110-229) identified seven purposes for the establishment of the NFNHA:

- To recognize the national importance of the natural and cultural legacies of the area, as demonstrated in the National Park Service study report entitled ''Niagara National Heritage Area Study'' dated 2005.
- To preserve, support, conserve, and interpret the natural, scenic, cultural, and historic resources within the National Heritage Area.
- To promote heritage, cultural, and recreational tourism and to develop educational and cultural programs for visitors and the general public.
- To recognize and interpret important events and geographic locations representing key developments in American history and culture,

2. The definition and critical components of sustainability for NHAs were agreed upon during development of National Heritage Area Evaluation Guide (2012).

including Native American, Colonial American, European American, and African American heritage.

- To enhance a cooperative management framework to assist State, local, and Tribal governments, the private sector, and citizens residing in the National Heritage Area in conserving, supporting, enhancing, and interpreting the significant historic, cultural, and recreational sites in the National Heritage Area.
- To conserve and interpret the history of the development of hydroelectric power in the United States and its role in developing the American economy
- To provide appropriate linkages among units of the National Park System within and surrounding the National Heritage Area, to protect, enhance, and interpret resources outside of park boundaries.

These purposes were used as the foundation for the NFNHA's management plan, which have shaped the activities, initiatives, and partnerships the NFNHA has developed. The relationship between the NFNHA's legislative purposes, management goals, and activities is best illustrated by Figure 3.1 on page 25 of this report. The legislative purposes of the NFNHA have remained foundational to the work and mission of the NFNHAI.

5.3 Management Capacity of the NFNHAI

The assessment of the NFNHAI's management capacity is based on the performance of the entity's leadership and staff; their ability to strategically plan and weather management changes; and the level of monitoring and recordkeeping conducted.

5.3.1 GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND OVERSIGHT

The current coordinating entity for the NFNHA is the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Inc (NFNHAI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. As discussed in Section 2, the NFNHAI was established and designated as the heritage area's coordinating entity in 2013, the heritage area was previously managed by a federal commission.

Board of Directors

The NFNHAI is overseen by a Board of Directors who set the goals and policies of the organization. The Board of Directors currently consists of 12 members, several who served on the previous NFNHA Federal Commission, representing a diversity of organizations and expertise in the Niagara Region. Details regarding the length of tenure on the Board and members' respective skill sets or backgrounds are shown in Section 2 of this report (see Table 2.4 on page 20).

While the Board is seen as capable and supportive, maintaining a productive working relationship with the NFNHA Staff, some interviewed in this study note there is there is room for improvement. A lack of regional leadership capacity (see Section 2.1.2 for current characteristics of the Niagara Region) has made filling board positions a perennial challenge; often the most engaged and capable participants serve on multiple boards and are unable to devote their full attention to the NFNHAI. To rectify this the NFNHAI is trying to appoint board members from smaller/grassroots organizations—though this can sometimes be at odds with the skills and experiences needed to operate a traditional board. The NFNHAI is also working to interest larger, Buffalo based foundations to fund projects within the Niagara Region.

Executive Director and Staff

Sara Capen was hired by the NFNHA Commission in 2011 as a Project Manager for the heritage area. In 2013 she was promoted to Executive Director of the NFNHAI and helped manage a smooth transition between the Commission and NFNHAI as the coordinating entity for the heritage area. She has been the NFNHAI's sole Executive Director and full-time employee. Staff, board members, and partners all agree that Sara is an incredibly capable, driven, and compassionate Executive Director who is an invested (and life-long) member of the Niagara Falls community. As the heritage area's only

employee from 2011 to 2015, Sara was primarily responsible for securing early NFNHA success and developing key partnerships. Mindful of the siloed thinking and widespread disinvestment that had come to characterize the Niagara Region, she prioritized trust-building and organizational support as key components for all NFNHA activities to strengthen community capacity. While her accomplishments and abilities are commendable, an over-reliance on her presence could ultimately hinder the sustainability of the NFNHA. Strategic planning and board development efforts currently underway are working to safeguard against this.

Since 2015, the NFNHAI has added two additional part-time employees who split their time with the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center through a joint task agreement between the organizations. However, due to the demands of designing, opening, and operating a new cultural institution, both part-time employees attested that they spend the majority of their time working on Heritage Center projects, as opposed to building NFNHAI capacity. As the Heritage Center (which opened in 2018) finds its footing and continues to expand its staffing, the heritage area employees are hopeful that they will be able to devote more of their time to broader NFNHA initiatives.

While the heritage area's small staff has been able to successfully run the NFNHAI, adapting to challenges and new responsibilities that arise as the heritage area grows and matures, they are often stretched beyond their capacity—as has been noted repeatedly in the NFNHA's annual NPS self-reporting forms.

5.3.2 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Since its approval by Congress in 2012, the NFNHA Management Plan has served as a source of meaningful guidance for the heritage area; helping to develop partnerships and systematically tackling new initiatives. Currently, the NFNHAI is involved in a strategic planning process to update and complement this management plan, with a specific focus on organizational sustainability. The new strategic plan, due to be finished in 2021, will help the NFNHAI plan for eventual managerial succession (to date, Sara Capen has been the NFNHAI sole Executive Director), strengthen and grow the organizations Board of Directors, and develop sustainable funding structures for carrying on the work of the organization should the NHA lose their federal funding authorization or have their funding reduced.

5.3.3 MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING

The NFNHAI has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity for monitoring and record keeping, though the collection of data on measurable goals has varied over the years as the NFNHA matured and took on more activities and as NPS reporting requirements changed. Most notable, monitoring and recordkeeping during the years the NFNHA was managed by a federal commission (2008-2013) were severely limited. Recently the NFNHAI has started publishing yearly snapshots to share the heritage area's accomplishments; this is particularly helpful in communicating the heritage area's more qualitative accomplishments and should continue.

5.4 Partnerships

The NFNHAI focuses much of its effort on building trust and cultivating authentic relationships with regional partners of all sizes and backgrounds (including local, state, and federal government agencies); it has served as a catalyst for the Niagara Region, unifying previously disparate stakeholders to combine resources, strengthen local capacity, and develop projects that have lasting impacts. Improved regional coordination was mentioned by nearly every interviewed partner organization and has been crucial for realizing some of the NFNHA's biggest achievements.

The NFNHAI has no formal process for designating partners; instead, they are committed to working with any willing organization that shares their mission to generate interpretive, environmental, economic, and social improvements for Niagara residents and visitors alike. The NFNHAI has a consistent core of partners they work with regularly and a more flexible peripheral network

Table 5.1: NFNHA revenue sources and total expenses by year 2013-2019

Although the NFNHA was established in 2008, the NFNHAI was not established as the coordinating entity until 2013 and financial data is limited before this year. Federal Revenue (NPS/HPP funds) is issued every year but can be used for up to two years after this issue date.

that expands and retracts with respect to each year's initiatives. Some years the NFNHAI has reported working with nearly 100 different partner organizations.

The development of a robust partnership network is perhaps the single most important achievement of the NFNHAI and will contribute significantly to the sustainability of the heritage area's mission.

5.5 Financial Sustainability

In order for an NHA to be financially sustainable it must have sufficient funds to cover its operating and programmatic expenses. Table 5.1 shows federal revenue (HPP funds); other revenue; total revenue; and total expenses—by year. The NFNHAI has been able to leverage millions of dollars to supplement the initial NPS federal investment and cover the full programmatic and operational expenses of the heritage area.

It should be noted that the NFNHAI's current financial sustainability is focused on making specific projects individually sustainable. An example of this is the Discover Niagara Shuttle. In 2019, after several years of effort, the NFNHA successfully secured a 1% increase in occupancy tax from the City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, and the City of Lockport to operate the Discover Niagara Shuttle. In a typical year this would generate close to $1 million dollars (2020 was the first full year that this increase was in place, but the COVID-19 pandemic severely limited tourism and thus funding acquired through the occupancy tax). The NFNHA reserves an administration fee to support the operations of the NFNHA in relation to this project, and the rest of the funding sustains the operation of the shuttle.

While the Discover Niagara Shuttle is now considered financially sustainable, the NFNHAI still needs funding for additional operational expenses and to sustain its organizational capacity. Such funding allows the NFNHAI to more easily shift attention and resources to the next action items within the heritage area; however, the potential for other sources of funding, including grants, is lacking in the region which makes diversifying funding sources to support the NFNHAI challenging.

5.6 Sustainability Summary

The evaluation found that the NFNHA has a number of the critical components of sustainability in place. It has the necessary governance, leadership, staff, and partnerships to operate a sustainable NHA; however, both the NHA designation and the NPS HPP funding are essential to the sustainability of the NFNHA. Federal funding has provided flexibility, a consistent source of discretionary funds, and ability to leverage other resources, while the NHA designation has elevated the significance of the region, enabling local stakeholders (including political representatives from local, state, and federal levels) to work together in ways they never did before.

Appendix A: Evaluation Legislation

Excerpt(s) from Public Law 113-291
113th Congress

An Act To authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

NOTE: Dec. 19, 2014 - [H.R. 3979]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, NOTE: Carl Levin and Howard P. `Buck'' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
(a) Short Title.--This Act may be cited as the `Carl Levin and Howard P. `Buck' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015''.

SEC. 3052. NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS AND

CORRIDORS.

(a) Extension of National Heritage Area Authorities.--

(1) Extensions.--
(A) Section 12 of Public Law 100-692 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; 102 Stat. 4558; 112 Stat. 3258; 123 Stat. 1292; 127 Stat. 420; 128 Stat. 314)

NOTE: 54 USC320101 note is amended--
(i) in subsection (c)(1), by striking `2015'' and inserting `2021''; and
(ii) in subsection (d), by striking `2015'' and inserting `2021''.

(B) Division II of Public Law 104-333 (16 U.S.C. 461 note) NOTE: 54 USC 320101 note. is amended by striking `2015'' each place it appears in the following sections & inserting `2021'':

(i) Section 107 (110 Stat. 4244; 127 Stat. 420; 128 Stat. 314).
(ii) Section 408 (110 Stat. 4256; 127 Stat. 420; 128 Stat. 314).
(iii) Section 507 (110 Stat. 4260; 127 Stat. 420; 128 Stat. 314).
(iv) Section 707 (110 Stat. 4267; 127 Stat. 420; 128 Stat. 314).
(v) Section 809 (110 Stat. 4275; 122 Stat. 826; 127 Stat. 420; 128 Stat. 314).
(vi) Section 910 (110 Stat. 4281; 127 Stat. 420; 128 Stat. 314).

(C) Section 109 of Public Law 105-355 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; 112 Stat. 3252)
NOTE: 54 USC 320101 note. is amended by striking `September 30, 2014'' and inserting September 30, 2021''.

(D) Public Law 106-278 NOTE: 54 USC 320101 note. (16 U.S.C. 461 note) is amended--

(i) in section 108 (114 Stat. 818; 127 Stat. 420; 128 Stat. 314), by striking `2015'' and inserting `2021''; and
(ii) in section 209 (114 Stat. 824), by striking the date that is 15 years after the date of enactment of this title'' and inserting `September 30, 2021''.

(E) Section 157(i) of Public Law 106-291 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; 114 Stat. 967) <<NOTE: 54 USC 320101 note.>> is amended by striking `2015'' and `2021''.

(F) Section 7 of Public Law 106-319 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; 114 Stat. 1284) <<NOTE: 54 USC 320101 note.>> is amended by striking `2015'' and insert¬ing `2021''.

(G) Title VIII of division B of H.R. 566 (Appendix D) as enacted into law by section 1(a) (4) of Public Law 106-554 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; 114 Stat. 2763, 2763A-295; 123 Stat. 1294)

<<NOTE: 54 USC 320101 note.>> is amended--
(i) in section 804(j), by striking `the day

occurring 15 years after the date of enactment of this title'' and inserting `September 30, 2021''; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following: `SEC. 811. TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE. `The authority of the Secretary to provide financial assistance under this title shall terminate on September 30, 2021.''.

(H) Section 106(b) of Public Law 103-449 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; 108 Stat. 4755; 113 Stat. 1726; <<NOTE: 54 USC 320101 note.>> 123 Stat. 1291) is amended, by striking `2015'' and inserting `2021''.

(2) <<NOTE: 54 USC 320101 note.>> Conditional extension of authorities.--

(A) In general.--The amendments made by paragraph

(1) (other than the amendments made by clauses (iii) and (iv) of paragraph (1)(B)), shall apply only through September 30, 2020, unless the Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this section as the `Secretary'')--

(i) conducts an evaluation of the accomplishments of the national heritage areas extended under paragraph (1), in accordance with subparagraph (B); and

(ii) prepares a report in accordance with subparagraph (C) that recommends a future role for the National Park Service with respect to the applicable national heritage area.

(B) Evaluation.--An evaluation conducted under subparagraph (A)(i) shall—

(i) assess the progress of the local management entity with respect to--

(I) accomplishing the purposes of the authorizing legislation for the national heritage area; and

(II) achieving the goals and objectives of the approved management plan for the national heritage area;

(ii) analyze the investments of Federal, State, tribal, and local government and private entities in each national heritage area to determine the impact of the investments; and

(iii) review the management structure, partnership relationships, and funding of the na¬tional heritage area for purposes of identifying the critical components for sustainability of the national heritage area.

(C) Report.--Based on the evaluation conducted under subparagraph (A)(i), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report that includes recommendations for the future role of the National Park Service with respect to the national heritage area. [...]

(c) National Heritage Area Redesignations.-- (1) Redesignation of the last green valley national heritage corridor.--
(A) In general.--The Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Act of 1994 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; Public Law 103-449) <<NOTE: 54 USC 320101 note.>> is amended--
(i) in section 103--(i) in section 103--
(I) in the heading, by striking `quinebaug and shetucket rivers valley national heritage corridor'' and inserting `last green valley national heritage corridor''; and
(II) in subsection (a), by striking `the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor'' and inserting `The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor''; and

(ii) in section 108(2), by striking `the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor under'' and inserting `The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor established by''.

(B) References.--Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor shall be deemed to be a reference to the `The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor''.

(2) Redesignation of motorcities national heritage area.--

(A) In general.--The Automobile National Heritage Area Act of 1998 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; Public Law 105-355) <<NOTE: 54 USC 320101 note.>> is amended--

(i) in section 102--

(I) in subsection (a)--
(aa) in paragraph (7), by striking `Automobile National Heritage Area Partnership'' and inserting `MotorCities National Heritage Area Partner¬ship''; and
(bb) in paragraph (8), by striking `Automobile National Heritage Area'' each place it appears and inserting `MotorCities National Heritage Area''; and
(II) in subsection (b)--
(aa) in the matter preceding paragraph

(1), by striking `Automobile National Heritage Area'' and inserting `MotorCities National Heritage Area''; and
(bb) in paragraph (2), by striking `Automobile National Heritage Area'' and inserting `MotorCities National Heritage Area'';
(ii) in section 103--
(I) in paragraph (2), by striking `Automobile National Heritage Area'' and inserting `MotorCities National Heritage Area''; and
(II) in paragraph (3), by striking `Automobile National Heritage Area Partnership'' and inserting MotorCities National Heritage Area Partner-ship'';
(iii) in section 104--
(I) in the heading, by striking `automobile national heritage area'' and inserting `motor¬cities national heritage area''; and
(II) in subsection (a), by striking `Automobile National Heritage Area'' and inserting `MotorCities National Heritage area''; and
(iv) in section 106, in the heading, by striking `automobile national heritage area partnership'' and inserting `motorcities national heritage area partnership''.

(B) References.--Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Automobile National Heritage Area shall be deemed to be a reference to the`MotorCities National Heritage Area''.

Approved December 19, 2014.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY--H.R. 3979:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 113-360 (Comm. on Ways and Means).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 160 (2014):

Mar. 11, considered and passed House.
Mar. 31, Apr. 1-3, 7, considered and passed Sen¬ate, amended. Dec. 4, House concurred in Sen¬ate amendment with an amendment. Dec. 12, Senate concurred in House amendment.

Appendix B: Authorizing Legislation

Subtitle B—Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

New York.
16 USC 461 note.

SEC. 421. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this subtitle include—

(1) to recognize the national importance of the natural and cultural legacies of the area, as demonstrated in the National Park Service study report entitled "Niagara National Heritage Area Study" dated 2005;

(2) to preserve, support, conserve, and interpret the natural, scenic, cultural, and historic resources within the National Heritage Area;

(3) to promote heritage, cultural, and recreational tourism and to develop educational and cultural programs for visitors and the general public;

(4) to recognize and interpret important events and geographic locations representing key developments in American history and culture, including Native American, Colonial American, European American, and African American heritage;

(5) to enhance a cooperative management framework to assist State, local, and Tribal governments, the private sector, and citizens residing in the National Heritage Area in conserving, supporting, enhancing, and interpreting the significant historic, cultural, and recreational sites in the National Heritage Area;

(6) to conserve and interpret the history of the development of hydroelectric power in the United States and its role in developing the American economy; and

(7) to provide appropriate linkages among units of the National Park System within and surrounding the National

Heritage Area, to protect, enhance, and interpret resources outside of park boundaries.

SEC. 422. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) COMMISSION.—The term "Commission" means the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission established under this subtitle.

(2) GOVERNOR.—The term "Governor" means the Governor of the State of New York.

(3) LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.—The term "local coordinating entity" means the local coordinating entity for the National Heritage Area designated pursuant to this subtitle.

(4) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—The term "management plan" means the plan prepared by the local coordinating entity for the National Heritage Area that specifies actions, policies, strategies, performance goals, and recommendations to meet the goals of the National Heritage Area, in accordance with this subtitle.

(5) NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA.—The term "National Heritage Area" means the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area established in this subtitle.

(6) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 423. DESIGNATION OF THE NIAGARA FALLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

(b) BOUNDARIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The National Heritage Area shall consist of the area from the western boundary of the town of Wheatfield, New York, extending to the mouth of the Niagara River on Lake Ontario, including the city of Niagara Falls, New York, the villages of Youngstown and Lewiston, New York, land and water within the boundaries of the Heritage Area in Niagara County, New York, and any additional thematically related sites within Erie and Niagara Counties, New York, that are identified in the management plan developed under this subtitle.

(2) MAP.—The boundaries of the National Heritage Area shall be as generally depicted on the map titled "Niagara Falls National Heritage Area," and numbered P76/80,000 and dated July, 2006. The map shall be on file and available to the public in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service and the local coordinating entity.

SEC. 424. MANAGEMENT PLAN.

(a) REQUIREMENTS.—The management plan for the National Heritage Area shall—

(1) describe comprehensive policies, goals, strategies, and recommendations for telling the story of the heritage of the area covered by the National Heritage Area and encouraging long-term resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development of the National Heritage Area;

(2) include a description of actions and commitments that Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, private organizations, and citizens will take to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area;

(3) specify existing and potential sources of funding or economic development strategies to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the National Heritage Area;

(4) include an inventory of the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area related to the national importance and themes of the National Heritage Area that should be protected, enhanced, interpreted, managed, funded, and developed;

(5) recommend policies and strategies for resource management, including the development of intergovernmental and interagency agreements to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area; Recommendations.

(6) describe a program for implementation for the management plan, including—

(A) performance goals;

(B) plans for resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development; and

(C) specific commitments for implementation that have been made by the local coordinating entity or any Federal, State, Tribal, or local government agency, organization, business, or individual;

(7) include an analysis of, and recommendations for, means by which Federal, State, Tribal, and local programs may best be coordinated (including the role of the National Park Service and other Federal agencies associated with the National Heritage Area) to further the purposes of this subtitle; and

(8) include a business plan that—

(A) describes the role, operation, financing, and functions of the local coordinating entity and of each of the major activities contained in the management plan; and

(B) provides adequate assurances that the local coordinating entity has the partnerships and financial and other resources necessary to implement the management plan for the National Heritage Area.

(b) DEADLINE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available to develop the management plan after designation as a National Heritage Area, the local coordinating entity shall submit the management plan to the Secretary for approval.

(2) TERMINATION OF FUNDING.—If the management plan is not submitted to the Secretary in accordance with paragraph (1), the local coordinating entity shall not qualify for any additional financial assistance under this subtitle until such time as the management plan is submitted to and approved by the Secretary.

(c) APPROVAL OF MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

Deadline.

(1) REVIEW.—Not later than 180 days after receiving the plan, the Secretary shall review and approve or disapprove the management plan for a National Heritage Area on the basis of the criteria established under paragraph (3).

(2) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall consult with the Governor before approving a management plan for the National Heritage Area.

(3) CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL.—In determining whether to approve a management plan for a National Heritage Area, the Secretary shall consider whether—

(A) the local coordinating entity represents the diverse interests of the National Heritage Area, including Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, natural and historic resource protection organizations, educational institutions, businesses, recreational organizations, community residents, and private property owners;

(B) the local coordinating entity—

(i) has afforded adequate opportunity for public and Federal, State, Tribal, and local governmental involvement (including through workshops and hearings) in the preparation of the management plan; and

(ii) provides for at least semiannual public meetings to ensure adequate implementation of the management plan;

(C) the resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development strategies described in the management plan, if implemented, would adequately protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the natural, historic, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area;

(D) the management plan would not adversely affect any activities authorized on Federal land under public land laws or land use plans;

(E) the local coordinating entity has demonstrated the financial capability, in partnership with others, to carry out the plan;

(F) the Secretary has received adequate assurances from the appropriate State, Tribal, and local officials whose support is needed to ensure the effective implementation of the State, Tribal, and local elements of the management plan; and

(G) the management plan demonstrates partnerships among the local coordinating entity, Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, regional planning organizations, nonprofit organizations, or private sector parties for implementation of the management plan.

(4) DISAPPROVAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary disapproves the management plan, the Secretary—

(i) shall advise the local coordinating entity in writing of the reasons for the disapproval; and

(ii) may make recommendations to the local coordinating entity for revisions to the management plan.

(B) DEADLINE.—Not later than 180 days after receiving a revised management plan, the Secretary shall approve or disapprove the revised management plan.

(5) AMENDMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An amendment to the management plan that substantially alters the purposes of the National Heritage Area shall be reviewed by the Secretary and approved or disapproved in the same manner as the original management plan.

(B) IMPLEMENTATION.—The local coordinating entity shall not use Federal funds authorized by this subtitle to implement an amendment to the management plan until the Secretary approves the amendment.

(6) AUTHORITIES.—The Secretary may—

(A) provide technical assistance under the authority of this subtitle for the development and implementation of the management plan; and

(B) enter into cooperative agreements with interested parties to carry out this subtitle.

SEC. 425. EVALUATION; REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years before the date on which authority for Federal funding terminates for the National Heritage Area under this subtitle the Secretary shall—

(1) conduct an evaluation of the accomplishments of the National Heritage Area; and

(2) prepare a report in accordance with subsection (c).

(b) EVALUATION.—An evaluation conducted under subsection (a)(1) shall—

(1) assess the progress of the local coordinating entity with respect to—

(A) accomplishing the purposes of the authorizing legislation for the National Heritage Area; and

(B) achieving the goals and objectives of the approved management plan for the National Heritage Area;

(2) analyze the Federal, State, Tribal, and local, and private investments in the National Heritage Area to determine the impact of the investments; and

(3) review the management structure, partnership relationships, and funding of the National Heritage Area for purposes of identifying the critical components for sustainability of the National Heritage Area.

(c) REPORT.—Based on the evaluation conducted under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall submit a report to the Committee on Natural Resources of the United States House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the United States Senate. The report shall include recommendations for the future role of the National Park Service, if any, with respect to the National Heritage Area.

SEC. 426. LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.

Effective dates.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The local coordinating entity for the Heritage Area shall be—

(1) for the 5-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this subtitle, the Commission; and

(2) on expiration of the 5-year period described in paragraph (1), a private nonprofit or governmental organization designated by the Commission.

(b) DUTIES.—To further the purposes of the National Heritage Area, the local coordinating entity, shall—

Plan.

(1) prepare a management plan for the National Heritage Area, and submit the management plan to the Secretary, in accordance with this subtitle;

Reports.

(2) submit an annual report to the Secretary for each fiscal year for which the local coordinating entity receives Federal funds under this subtitle, specifying—

(A) the specific performance goals and accomplishments of the local coordinating entity;

(B) the expenses and income of the local coordinating entity;

(C) the amounts and sources of matching funds;

(D) the amounts leveraged with Federal funds and sources of the leveraging; and

(E) grants made to any other entities during the fiscal year;

(3) make available for audit for each fiscal year for which the local coordinating entity receives Federal funds under this subtitle, all information pertaining to the expenditure of the funds and any matching funds;

(4) encourage economic viability and sustainability that is consistent with the purposes of the National Heritage Area; and

(5) coordinate projects, activities, and programs with the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

(c) AUTHORITIES.—For the purposes of preparing and implementing the approved management plan for the National Heritage Area, the local coordinating entity may use Federal funds made available under this subtitle to—

(1) make grants to political jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, and other parties within the National Heritage Area;

(2) enter into cooperative agreements with or provide technical assistance to political jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, Federal agencies, and other interested parties;

(3) hire and compensate staff, including individuals with expertise in—

(A) natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resource conservation;

(B) economic and community development; and

(C) heritage planning;

(4) obtain funds or services from any source, including other Federal programs;

(5) contract for goods or services; and

(6) support activities of partners and any other activities that further the purposes of the National Heritage Area and are consistent with the approved management plan.

(d) PROHIBITION ON ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY.—The local coordinating entity may not use Federal funds authorized under this subtitle to acquire any interest in real property.

SEC. 427. NIAGARA FALLS HERITAGE AREA COMMISSION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within the Department of the Interior the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Commission shall be composed of 17 members, of whom—

(1) 1 member shall be the Director of the National Park Service (or a designee);

(2) 5 members shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the Governor, from among individuals with knowledge and experience of—

(A) the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the Niagara River Greenway Commission, the New York Power Authority, the USA Niagara Development Corporation, and the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation; or

(B) any successors of the agencies described in subparagraph (A);

(3) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the mayor of Niagara Falls, New York;

(4) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the mayor of the village of Youngstown, New York;

(5) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the mayor of the village of Lewiston, New York;

(6) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the Tuscarora Nation;

(7) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the Seneca Nation of Indians; and

(8) 6 members shall be individuals who have an interest in, support for, and expertise appropriate to tourism, regional planning, history and historic preservation, cultural or natural resource management, conservation, recreation, and education, or museum services, of whom—

(A) 4 members shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the 2 members of the Senate from the State; and

(B) 2 members shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the Member of the House of Representatives whose district encompasses the National Heritage Area.

(c) TERMS; VACANCIES.—

(1) TERM.—A member of the Commission shall be appointed for a term not to exceed 5 years.

(2) VACANCIES.—

(A) PARTIAL TERM.—A member appointed to fill a vacancy on the Commission shall serve for the remainder of the term for which the predecessor of the member was appointed.

(B) IN GENERAL.—A vacancy on the Commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(d) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—

(1) SELECTION.—The Commission shall select a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from among the members of the Commission.

(2) VICE CHAIRPERSON.—The Vice Chairperson shall serve as the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.

(e) QUORUM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum.

(2) TRANSACTION.—For the transaction of any business or the exercise of any power of the Commission, the Commission shall have the power to act by a majority vote of the members present at any meeting at which a quorum is in attendance.

(f) MEETINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall meet at least quarterly at the call of—

(A) the Chairperson; or

(B) a majority of the members of the Commission.

(2) NOTICE.—Notice of Commission meetings and agendas for the meetings shall be published in local newspapers that are distributed throughout the National Heritage Area.

(3) APPLICABLE LAW.—Meetings of the Commission shall be subject to section 552b of title 5, United States Code.

(g) AUTHORITIES OF THE COMMISSION.—In addition to the authorities otherwise granted in this subtitle, the Commission may—

(1) request and accept from the head of any Federal agency, on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis, any personnel of the Federal agency to the Commission to assist in carrying out the duties of the Commission;

(2) request and accept from the head of any State agency or any agency of a political subdivision of the State, on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis, any personnel of the agency to the Commission to assist in carrying out the duties of the Commission;

(3) seek, accept, and dispose of gifts, bequests, grants, or donations of money, personal property, or services; and

(4) use the United States mails in the same manner as other agencies of the Federal Government.

(h) DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.—To further the purposes of the National Heritage Area, in addition to the duties otherwise listed in this subtitle, the Commission shall assist in the transition of the management of the National Heritage Area from the Commission to the local coordinating entity designated under this subtitle.

(i) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A member of the Commission shall serve without compensation.

(2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of the duties of the Commission.

(j) GIFTS.—For purposes of section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, any gift or charitable contribution to the Commission shall be considered to be a charitable contribution or gift to the United States.

(k) USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS.—Except as provided for the leasing of administrative facilities under subsection (g)(1), the Commission may not use Federal funds made available to the Commission under this subtitle to acquire any real property or interest in real property.

SEC. 428. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this subtitle affects the authority of a Federal agency to provide technical or financial assistance under any other law.

(b) CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION.—The head of any Federal agency planning to conduct activities that may have an impact on a National Heritage Area is encouraged to consult and coordinate the activities with the Secretary and the local coordinating entity to the maximum extent practicable.

(c) OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Nothing in this subtitle—

(1) modifies, alters, or amends any law or regulation authorizing a Federal agency to manage Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Federal agency;

(2) limits the discretion of a Federal land manager to implement an approved land use plan within the boundaries of a National Heritage Area; or

(3) modifies, alters, or amends any authorized use of Federal land under the jurisdiction of a Federal agency.

SEC. 429. PRIVATE PROPERTY AND REGULATORY PROTECTIONS.

Nothing in this subtitle—

(1) abridges the rights of any property owner (whether public or private), including the right to refrain from participating in any plan, project, program, or activity conducted within the National Heritage Area;

(2) requires any property owner to permit public access (including access by Federal, State, Tribal, or local agencies) to the property of the property owner, or to modify public access or use of property of the property owner under any other Federal, State, Tribal, or local law;

(3) alters any duly adopted land use regulation, approved land use plan, or other regulatory authority of any Federal, State, Tribal, or local agency, or conveys any land use or other regulatory authority to any local coordinating entity, including but not necessarily limited to development and management of energy, water, or water-related infrastructure;

(4) authorizes or implies the reservation or appropriation of water or water rights;

(5) diminishes the authority of the State to manage fish and wildlife, including the regulation of fishing and hunting within the National Heritage Area; or

(6) creates any liability, or affects any liability under any other law, of any private property owner with respect to any person injured on the private property.

SEC. 430. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Subject to subsection (b), there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subtitle not more than $1,000,000 for any fiscal year. Funds so appropriated shall remain available until expended.

(b) LIMITATION ON TOTAL AMOUNTS APPROPRIATED.—Not more than $15,000,000 may be appropriated to carry out this subtitle.

(c) COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT.—The Federal share of the total cost of any activity under this subtitle shall be not more than 50 percent; the non-Federal contribution may be in the form of in-kind contributions of goods or services fairly valued.

SEC. 431. USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS FROM OTHER SOURCES.

Nothing in this subtitle shall preclude the local coordinating entity from using Federal funds available under other laws for the purposes for which those funds were authorized.

SEC. 432. SUNSET FOR GRANTS AND OTHER ASSISTANCE.

The authority of the Secretary to provide financial assistance under this subtitle terminates on the date that is 15 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

Appendix C:
Domain and Source Crosswalk

Evaluation Q.1: Has the NHA coordinating entity accomplished the purposes of the authorizing legislation and achieved the goals and objectives of the management plan?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Nature of NFNHA activities						
Description of activities including but not limited to heritage preservation, interpretation, education, stewardship, public outreach, infrastructure development, and planning	X	X		X	X	
Implementation of activities						
Role of the NFNHA	X	X		X	X	
Role of NFNHA adminstrative staff	X	X		X	X	
Role of partnership netwok	X	X		X	X	
Role of local community	X	X	X	X	X	
Impact of activities						
Development that is successful in meeting objectives	X	X	X	X	X	
Increased understanding, awareness and appreciation of NFNHA resources & stories	X	X	X		X	
Increased local sense of pride and connection to place		X	X			
Growth and development of partner network	X	X		X		
Trust and support among partners	X	X				

Evaluation Q.1: Has the NHA coordinating entity accomplished the purposes of the authorizing legislation and achieved the goals and objectives of the management plan?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Engagement of residents and visitors (# served/ involved/ affected)	X	X	X		X	
Environmental, cultural, and historic resources conservation	X	X		X	X	
Economic impact/ Job creation	X	X				X

Evaluation Q.2: What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal, and local government and private entities?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Financial investments						
Amount of NPS NHA Federal funding	X			X		X
Amount of other Federal funding	X			X		X
Amount/ sources of other funding	X			X		X
In-Kind Match support	X			X		X
Grant sought and awarded	X			X		X
Amount/ diversity of donor contributions	X			X		X
Impact of financial investments						
Amount of dollars committed to each NHA activity	X	X				X
Revenue generated from NHA program activities	X					

Evaluation Q.2: What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal, and local government and private entities?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Consistency of donor support	X	X			X	X
Expansion of base of donors	X				X	X
Economic impact/ job creation	X					X
Other types of investments						
Partnership contributions (e.g., time, staff, resources)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Community contributions (e.g., volunteerism)	X	X				X
Other In-Kind donations	X	X				X
Impacts of other investment sources						
Educational impacts	X	X		X		
Marketing and promotional	X	X		X		
Staff enhancement and retention	X	X		X		X
Land/ facilities acquisition	X	X		X		X
Economic impact/ job creation	X					X

Evaluation Q.3 How do the NHA management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Nature of management structure						
Description of management structure	X	X		X	X	X
Description of NFNHA mission and vision	X	X	X	X	X	X
Description of NFNHA goals	X	X		X	X	
Description of staffing and volunteers	X	X		X	X	
Description of governance & role in organization	X			X	X	
Description of executive leadership & role in organization	X			X	X	
NFNHA's contribution to sustainability						
Diversity of skills and expertise	X	X		X		
Capacity for adaptive management over time (incl. changes in staffing levels, strategic planning, etc.)	X			X		X
Investments in developing staff and career advancement opportunities	X	X		X		
Clear NFNHA goals with well-defined timeframes	X			X		X
System for setting annual goals or for establishing budgets	X	X		X		X
Systematic process for collecting data on measurable goals and usage of data (monitoring and evaluation)	X			X		X
Established fundraising plan (immediate and long-term, sustainable impacts)	X	X	X	X		
Established system of financial accountability	X	X	X	X		

Evaluation Q.3 How do the NHA management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Transparency of systems for setting goals, establishing budgets and financial accountability (a public or private process)	X	X		X		
Stakeholder development plan (sustainable impacts)	X					
Growth and development of partner network	X			X		
Transparent and effective communication channels with governance, staff, volunteers, partners, etc.	X			X		
Established and consistent communication mechanisms with partners, members and local residents	X			X		
Coordinating entity has leadership role in partner network	X					
Nature of partner network						
List of partners	X	X		X	X	
Purpose of each partnership	X	X		X		
Partners' involvement with NFNHA	X	X		X		
Resource commitment from partners (for what? for how long?)	X	X				
Partner network's contribution to sustainability						
Broad base of partners representing diverse interests and expertise in the NFNHA	X	X		X	X	
Partner collaboration and combination of investments to accomplish NFNHA objectives	X	X		X	X	

Evaluation Q.3 How do the NHA management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Partner retention over time	X	X				
Number of partners over time	X			X		
Partners' role(s)on NFNHA boards	X					
Trust and support among partners	X	X				
Financial sustainability						
Amount of dollars committed to each NFNHA activity over time	X	X		X		X
Allocation of Federal funds over time	X			X		X
Sources and amount of leveraged/ matching funds over time	X	X		X		X
Activities that can continue post sunset of Federal dollars	X					
Economic impact on sustainability						
Resource stewardship resulting in improved economic value of NFNHA	X	X				X
Improved earned income over time	X	X				X
Trends in return on fundraising investment	X					X
Trends in contribution and grants ratio – indicates dependence on voluntary support	X					
Trends in debt ratio	X					
Trends in average annual operating revenue	X					
Economic impact/ job creation	X					

Appendix D: NFNHA Timeline

Year	Activity
2002	• Public law 107-256 passed directing the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area
2005	• Publication of the Niagara National Heritage Area Study
2008	• Public law 110-229 passed designating the NFNHA
2009	• Developed RFP and awarded contract for Heritage Area Management Plan
2010	• NFNHA Commission seated
2011	• First grants awarded • Initiated development of Junior Ranger program • Assisted with the Niagara Falls Day at the National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference
2012	• Developed first educational fieldtrips to Old Fort Niagara with help of ABI/National Park Foundation Grant • Approval of NFNHA management plan • Developed War of 1812 Trading Card Series
2013	• Began process of digitizing Niagara Falls Public Library photography collection documenting the building and operations of the Schoellkopf Power Plant • Transitioned to a non-profit • Developed NFNHA Long-Range Interpretive Plan • Expansion of educational fieldtrips to Old Fort Niagara • Expansion of War of 1812 Trading Card Series • Discover Niagara Summer Field Trip Programs first offered • Awarded funds to Historical Association of Lewiston to develop interpretive signage next to the Tuscarora Heroes Monument in Lewiston • Awarded funds to Village of Youngstown to create a general information brochure for a historical walking tour of the Village of Youngstown • Awarded funds to History Center of Niagara to design an interactive scale model of the Flight of Five lock system to be used at the Erie Canal Discovery Center • Awarded funds to Neto Hatikanakwe to create five replica wampum belts that tell the history and culture of the Tuscarora people • Awarded funds to McClew Interpretive Center at Murphy's Orchard, a Network of Freedom site, to enhance their walking trail, install interpretive signage and print an interpretive guidebook to their site • Awarded funds to Niagara Arts and Cultural Center to develop a website and educational materials detailing the history of Portage Road

Year	Activity
2014	• Launched NFNHA website and social media accounts • Launched Junior Rangers program • Oakwood Cemetery listed on NR • Completion of Schoellkopf Power Plant Digital History Project (digitization of "power and industry" photographs with the NF Public Librabry) • Hosted the Alliance of National Heritage Area Fall Meeting • Partnered with Disability Awareness Training program to improve visitor access at NFNHA sites • Began implementation of Long Range Interpretive Plan • Expanded educational programs to include additional school districts and partner sites • Held the Discover Niagara Journey to Greatness Essay Contest for local students
2015	• Released NFNHA Destination Brochure and Map • Publication of NFNHA Baseline Study • Hired a Project Coordinator (current title Director and Curator) who splits time between the NFNHA and the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center (the Heritage Center) • Conservation of artifacts to commemorate the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 by The Buffalo History Museum • Digitized 1,000+ photographs help by the NF Public Library that track the rise and decline of the power and industry story of NF • Completed Historic Point Signage Replacement Project • Began Heritage River Tours Program • Museum of disABILITY History created an interpretive exhibit about P.H. Skinner the school he established for African-American children with disabilities in Niagara Falls in 1860 • Launched Oakwood Cemetery Person of Distinction Program • Further expanded educational programing at Old Fort Niagara to become "Fridays on the Frontier" • Developed Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society Docent Training Program and Legacy Tours Program • Co-sponsored the Buffalo Presidential Center Speaker Series • Co-sponsored African-American Male Wellness Walk • Sponsored the presentation of “Parks as a Living Laboratory” by Mary Miss
2016	• Launched Discover Niagara shuttle • Launched Discover Niagara mobile app • Completed the Freedom Crossing Exhibit redesign • Co-sponsored Niagara Falls Garden Walk • Sponsored Niagara Falls Amtrak Station Community Day • Sponsored Sojourner Truth Lecture for woman's history month • Celebrated the opening for the Museum of African American History and Culture • Held trainings for partner organizations
2017	• Completed Discover Niagara Shuttle Economic Impact Study • Designed and installed the Courtyard Marriott and Power City Eatery Exhibitions utilizing previously digitized historical photographs • Provided grant support to develop Buffalo Olmsted Conservancy Map and Guide • Partnered with Bravo Niagara, Canada to commemorate the bi-national heritage of the Underground Railroad (Voices of Freedom Festival) • Launched Earthsong Project at Artpark • Hired a Director of Education who splits time between the NFNHA and the NFUGRRHC

Year	Activity
2018	• Opened the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center (first cultural attraction to open in NF in 37 years) • First public art bench installed • Expanded Discover Niagara Shuttle • Hosted workshop on decolonizing history with International Coalition of Sites of Conscience • Further expanded Old Fort Niagara educational program from “Fridays on the Frontier" to "Fall Frontier Days" • Digitized of the Cataract House Hotel registries
2019	• Co-hosted the National Park Service Network to Freedom training • Secured a 1% increase in the occupancy tax to sustainably fund the Discover Niagara Shuttle • Developed a walking trail starting in the North End of Niagara Falls, going to the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center, and ending at the Niagara Gorge trails. It included streetscape improvements, crosswalks, and murals • Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center received the Award of Excellence from the American Association for State & Local History • Completed Niagara Falls Public Library Local History Collection Needs Assessment • Began development of strategic plan • Sponsored "Dear Nina: A Sonic Love Letter to Nina Simone" • Sponsored mural project on the African Heritage Food Co-op building
2020	• Supported the digitization or Oakwood Cemetery burial records • Lunched first phase of Niagara Falls Public Library Local History Inventory Project • Discover Niagara Shuttle re-purposed for COVID relief and voting support • Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center launched a virtual tour program • Launched an oral history project titled “Life on Main Street” • Updated and released a new website • Expanded public art initiative, completion of 5 new murals • Provided funding for "Art of Walking" program • Sponsored "Art of Suffrage" exhibit at the Lockport Kenan House • Sponsored "John Lewis Weekend"